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**ATLANTIC CONTINGENCY: JONATHAN DICKINSON**

**AND THE ANGLO-ATLANTIC WORLD, 1655-1725**

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CO: Colonial Office, British National Archives  
HSP: Historical Society of Pennsylvania  
JDLB: Jonathan Dickinson Letterbook  
LCP: Library Company of Philadelphia  
LFP: Logan Family Papers  
LJDE: Letters of Jonathan Dickinson Estate  
MDLP, Maria Dickinson Logan Family Papers  
PRO: Public Record Office, British National Archives



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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation is about how Jonathan Dickinson (1663-1722), a second-generation Anglo-Jamaican planter and early-Philadelphian merchant, made sense of the mercurial and uncertain Atlantic world around the turn of the eighteenth century. The following chapters examine Dickinson's interactions with an extremely diverse group of European, Native American, and African peoples who collectively comprised a formative generation of colonial society in North America and the West Indies. The main purpose of this dissertation is to provide a counterpoint to the many tautologous, whiggish, and nationalistic interpretations of Anglo-Atlantic history that tend to deemphasise the obvious disconnections, disruptions, discord, and diversity apparent during the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries. This dissertation further contends that individuals, driven by self-preservation and influenced by local circumstances, dictated the direction and the pace of many inter-colonial, inter-imperial, and trans-Atlantic developments familiar to the late-eighteenth century Anglo-Atlantic world. In short, new exigencies outweighed custom, and self-preservation, rather than directives from metropolitan governments, guided Atlantic peoples' actions. By extension of individual actions, the nascent British Atlantic Empire began to take shape.

## **CHAPTER 1: SAME OLD ATLANTIC?**

This dissertation is about how Jonathan Dickinson (1663-1722), a second-generation Anglo-Jamaican planter and early-Philadelphian merchant, made sense of the mercurial and uncertain Atlantic world around the turn of the eighteenth century. The following chapters examine Dickinson's interactions with an extremely diverse group of European, Native American, and African peoples who collectively comprised a formative generation of colonial society in North America and the West Indies. By analysing Dickinson's social and commercial maneuvers through the uncertainties of this period, this work argues that contingency for unforeseen events was a fundamental organising principle of many early-Atlantic peoples.

In very specific ways, local circumstances in three important Atlantic colonies—Jamaica, Florida, and Pennsylvania—were manifest in interesting and instructive ways in the trove of documents Dickinson generated during his lifetime. The plight of historically marginalised peoples also receives considerable, albeit inadvertent, attention in Dickinson's vast body of personal and professional correspondence. Accordingly, the main purpose of this dissertation is to provide a counterpoint to the many tautologous, whiggish, and nationalistic interpretations of Anglo-Atlantic history that tend to de-emphasise the obvious disconnections, disruptions, discord, and diversity that were apparent during the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries in the Anglo-Atlantic world. By utilising Dickinson's life trajectory as a lens to examine three broad historiographical themes—time, space, and structure—this dissertation further contends that individuals, driven by self-preservation and influenced by local circumstances, dictated the direction and the pace of many inter-colonial and trans-Atlantic

developments familiar to the late-eighteenth-century Anglo-Atlantic world. In short, new exigencies outweighed custom, and self-preservation, rather than directives from metropolitan governments, guided Atlantic peoples' actions. Only by extension of individual actions, could the nascent British Atlantic Empire take shape.

Periodisation underpins this dissertation. Dickinson's life spanned a fundamentally understudied period of early-American and Atlantic-world history, the period between 1655 and 1725, and in particular the 1690s through the 1710s. The years on either side of 1700 are easily the least studied decades of all American history. Ned Landsman has characterised the period as a 'death valley' of historical scholarship.<sup>1</sup> Despite the possibilities for interesting and un-replicated work many historians simply touch on these years in their studies while very few dedicate their attention solely to this transformative period.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, this study focuses specifically on evaluating this historiographical disregard and the opportunities provided by analysing both the contemporary problems and the scholastic difficulties of this period.

This subject and this period also provide an opportunity for scholars to step beyond the typical national boundaries of Atlantic history. During this period, trans-Atlantic relationships between mother countries and colonies were often ill defined and fluid. As a result, colonists, either more willing or better suited to maneuver across

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<sup>1</sup> Ned Landsman, *From Colonials to Provincials. American Thought and Culture, 1680-1760* (Ithaca, 1997), p. xi.

<sup>2</sup> Notable exceptions include: Wesley Frank Craven, *The American Colonies in Transition, 1660-1713* (New York, 1963); Ian Steele, *The English Atlantic. An Exploration of Communication and Community, 1675-1740* (Oxford, 1986); Alan Gallay, *The Indian Slave Trade. The Rise of the English Atlantic Empire in the American South, 1670-1717* (New Haven, 2002); Richard Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves. The Rise of the Planter Class in the English West Indies, 1624-1717* (Chapel Hill, 1972). Many other monographs take a slightly longer chronological period in order to study the social history of individual colonies during the eighteenth century.

imperial lines, developed relationships with a myriad of peoples who did not necessarily identify themselves as English. The diversity of Atlantic world peoples is reflected in the diversity of their interactions. During the late-seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, the home government left the Anglo-Atlantic colonies largely unsupervised and unregulated. Salutory neglect, the long-lasting British policy of avoiding strict enforcement of parliamentary laws to keep colonies obedient, is well studied.<sup>3</sup> My work explicitly examines the period when England did not have a coherent imperial policy, or the ability to enforce one, revealing how relative isolation from England allowed for unique, yet complementary, inter-colonial and trans-imperial socio-economic trends to develop throughout the Atlantic world.<sup>4</sup>

The contentious conditions of local milieus, I will argue, heavily influenced the trends that guided the development of disparate colonies around the Anglo-Atlantic. Furthermore, as a result of various political and economic struggles, colonists developed localised colonial identities that did not necessarily coincide with directions from the mother country. Moreover, this quasi-independence helped create a generation of ambitious Atlantic-world peoples, like Jonathan Dickinson, who were forced to negotiate the exigencies of their lives in the colonies by reacting and creating avenues for contingency for the seemingly endless problems, turned opportunities, they faced as a result of this imperial neglect.

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<sup>3</sup> James Henretta, *Salutory Neglect. Colonial Administration under the Duke of Newcastle* (Princeton, 1972).

<sup>4</sup> Salutory neglect occurred in three time periods. From 1607 to 1696, England had no coherent imperial policy. From 1696 to 1763, England (and after 1707 the Kingdom of Great Britain) tried to form a coherent policy through the Navigation Act but did not enforce it. Finally, from 1763 to 1775, British policy-makers developed a coherent policy designed to rein in the unwieldy colonies and generate tax revenue after the Seven Years War. See Henretta, *Salutory Neglect*; Craven, *The Colonies in Transition*.

This dissertation is largely about the Anglo-Atlantic world because our main character is Anglophone. The following chapters, however, also incorporate a number of different Atlantic colonies and their peoples. Therefore, the following chapters examine Dickinson's interactions from three European Atlantic colonies: Jamaica, Florida, and Pennsylvania. I selected these three colonies for two reasons. First, this dissertation utilises Dickinson's life trajectory as an organising principle; therefore, his interests in these three colonies provide a logical methodological approach. Second, and more importantly, these three colonies, Jamaica, Florida, and Pennsylvania, represented critical crossroads of international exchange. Therefore, they provide several instructive examples that illustrate the exigencies of and contingencies for the issues various Atlantic world peoples faced during the turn of the eighteenth century. For example, in the early 1700s Dickinson turned his run-in with French privateers in the Bahamas and subsequent captivity in Saint Domingue into opportunity by developing trade with the under-supplied island. While in Florida, Dickinson observed how Native Americans actively incorporated Europeans and their trade goods into their local world. He further observed how captivity among Native Americans acted as a social leveler when several of his enslaved Africans openly criticised their white counterparts to gain material benefits from their Native American captors. In Pennsylvania, Dickinson and some of his West Indian counterparts deliberately imported enslaved African despite an emerging anti-slavery sentiment expressed by fellow Quakers.

The remaining sections of this introduction provide a framework for the proceeding analysis by exploring four questions. First, who was Jonathan Dickinson and why study his life? Second, why study this period, 1655 to 1725? Third, why study these

three distinct places, Jamaica, Florida, and Pennsylvania? Finally, why use the Atlantic world paradigm to explore, this man, this time period, and these places?

### **Who was Jonathan Dickinson?**

Jonathan Dickinson was a West-Indian planter, a trans-Atlantic merchantman, an Atlantic-world traveler, a Quaker, a ship-owner, a slave-owner, a slave-trader, a smuggler, a bureaucrat, a judge, a Philadelphian mayor, a provincial representative, a father, a husband, a brother, a son, a real-estate speculator, a captive of Native Americans, a captive of French privateers, an author of a famous captivity narrative, and near the end of his life, an ambassador to the Five Nations of the Iroquois.<sup>5</sup> Dickinson traveled to and maintained connections in many corners of the Atlantic world. These

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<sup>5</sup> A vast body of primary sources including Dickinson's many letter-books held at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania and the Library Company of Philadelphia supports the following biographical sketch. Only three secondary sources offer sustained commentary on Dickinson's life. In 1945, Charles Andrews briefly sketched Dickinson's biography in his notes as he prepared Dickinson's journal for publication. Unfortunately, Andrews died before he could annotate his biographical sketch; therefore his wife, Evangeline Walker Andrews, published his notes without citations to trace. Evangeline Andrews and Charles Andrews (eds), *Jonathan Dickinson's Journal or God's Protecting Providence. Being the Narrative of a Journey from Port Royal in Jamaica to Philadelphia between August 23, 1696 and April 1, 1697* (New Haven, 1945), pp. 124-32. Andrews also published a short article about Dickinson. Most the material covered in the article is also covered in his notes for the journal. Andrews, 'God's Protecting Providence: A Journal by Jonathan Dickinson', *Florida Historical Quarterly*, 21:2 (1942), pp. 107-126. In 1997, a third work on Dickinson appeared in a much larger project that collected biographical information regarding Pennsylvanian legislators during the colonial period. Craig Horle's biography of Dickinson has proved to be foundational in my research. From this essay I have traced many of Dickinson's trans-Atlantic connections. Considering that Dickinson only appears in the footnotes of other scholarly work and considering the vast body of primary resources regarding Dickinson, this work is a masterpiece in its simplicity. Horle explores many under-utilized sources and provides us with beautifully distilled version of Dickinson's life in Philadelphia. Craig W. Horle, 'Jonathan Dickinson', in Craig W. Horle, Jeffery L. Scheib and Joseph S. Foster (eds), *Lawmaking and Legislators in Pennsylvania. A Biographical Dictionary, 1710-1756* (Philadelphia, 1997), p. 309. These scholars, however, generally fail to provide us with the larger context and importance of Dickinson's life and his interactions with various Atlantic world peoples.

places included: from London, Bristol, and Madeira, to Pennsylvania, New York, Virginia, South Carolina, Jamaica, Antigua, Surinam, Curacao, the Central American coast, and Saint Domingue. These many trans-imperial and trans-Atlantic affairs generated great prosperity for Dickinson; yet, misfortune visited him on numerous occasions. Despite his mercurial balance sheet, Dickinson, along with his immediate family, actively managed the prosperity and peril of the late-seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

By maintaining nearly 10,000 acres in Jamaica, a vast amount of real estate in Pennsylvania, and conducting trading affairs on four continents, Dickinson created a trans-Atlantic network that historians will find useful in explaining the development of the Anglo-Atlantic world. The hard work of this first-generation Anglo-Jamaican and Anglo-Pennsylvanian created a legacy for several generations of Dickinsons thereafter. Yet, nothing for Dickinson, like the period in general, was certain. His fortune and misfortune were intimately intertwined and within two decades of Dickinson's death his entire trans-Atlantic estate was dismantled. Good, bad, or indifferent, Dickinson *lived* the Atlantic world.

Jonathan Dickinson was born in 1663 in Port Royal, Jamaica, the son of Francis and Margaret Dickinson.<sup>6</sup> He was the grandson of the Anglican rector of Appleton, Berkshire, Reverend William Dickinson, and the nephew of Doctor Edmund Dickinson, an Oxford-educated personal physician of Charles II and James II.<sup>7</sup> When Dickinson's father, Captain Francis Dickinson, came to Jamaica, he was not particularly wealthy, but

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<sup>6</sup> Dickinson's birth record remains undiscovered but working backward from his age (59) at the time of death (which is documented) it appears that he was born in 1663.

<sup>7</sup> Andrews and Andrews, *Jonathan Dickinson's Journal*, p. 124; Horle, 'Jonathan Dickinson', in *Lawmaking and Legislators in Pennsylvania*, p. 309.



he appears to have been, at least, well connected.<sup>8</sup> Oliver Cromwell, for example, permitted Francis to raise a troop of horses for the ill-fated Western Design expedition of 1654.<sup>9</sup>

While the events of Jonathan Dickinson's life before the 1690s are almost completely unknown, it is evident from his letters that he spent his adolescence and early adulthood splitting time between this family's plantations in St. Elizabeth and their store in Port Royal.<sup>10</sup> Growing up in the fields of the plantation and in the halls of the counting house in Port Royal, Dickinson experienced the prospects and perils of his father's sugar planting and trans-Atlantic trade. In 1685, Jonathan Dickinson married Mary Gale.<sup>11</sup> More than likely, Francis Dickinson and John Gale, another prominent merchant and ex-military man living in Port Royal, made this match to solidify their trading relationship. Although Dickinson at some point acquired a house in Spanish Town and apparently worked in his father's store in Port Royal, he hinted in 1698 that he was more familiar with the life of a planter.<sup>12</sup>

The 1690s in Jamaica, the subject of Chapter Two, was an enduring period of great uncertainty. During this decade, slave revolts, inconsistent labor supplies, foreign invasions, disease, internal political squabbles, religious persecution, lack of support and

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<sup>8</sup> Harrold E. Gillingham, 'The Estate of Jonathan Dickinson, 1663-1722', *The Pennsylvania Magazine of Biography and History*, 59:4 (1935), p. 420.

<sup>9</sup> Andrews and Andrews, *Jonathan Dickinson's Journal*, pp. 3-5. For the English conquest of Jamaica see: Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, pp.151-53. Carl Bridenbaugh and Roberta Bridenbaugh, *No Peace Beyond the Line. The English in the Caribbean, 1624-1690* (New York, 1972), pp. 201-04. S. A. G. Taylor, 'Military Operations in Jamaica, 1655-1660, An Appreciation', *Jamaican Historical Review*, 2:1 (1949), pp.7-25.

<sup>10</sup> This is a supposition gleaned from examining the tone of Dickinson thousands of personal and professional letters. He never clearly states where he spent the majority of his adolescence.

<sup>11</sup> Gillingham, 'The Estate of Jonathan Dickinson', p. 420.

<sup>12</sup> Horle, 'Jonathan Dickinson', in *Legislators and Lawmakers*, p. 309.

supply from the mother country, and the resulting destruction of natural disaster combined in pushing the colony to the brink of collapse. Accordingly, Dickinson decided to leave the struggling island for the burgeoning mercantile port and Quaker haven, Philadelphia. His journey to Philadelphia from Jamaica was perilous.

Several weeks after departing Port Royal, Dickinson, (along with his wife and infant child, Jonathan, a Philadelphia ship captain, a Caribbean crew, and eleven enslaved Africans), was shipwrecked along Florida's east coast. The events along Florida's east coast in 1696, the subject of Chapter Three, fundamentally altered Dickinson's perception of the world and his position within it. His journal, published as *God's Protecting Providence* in 1699, relating the details of his interactions with several autonomous Native American peoples and their Spanish counterparts altered historical and ethnographic understandings of European and Native American interactions in the American Southeast.<sup>13</sup> The physical, emotional, and financial hardships Dickinson and company faced during their two months in Florida proved to be only the beginning of Dickinson's woes. The journey resulted in a net loss of nearly £2,000. Nearly destitute, Philadelphia's Quaker society integrated Dickinson into their community by providing temporary positions in the provincial government, which they dominated.

Dickinson and his family found it difficult to adjust to life in Philadelphia (the subject of Chapter Four). His first business ventures resulted in significant financial

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<sup>13</sup> The full title of the first published edition: *God's Protecting Providence: Man's Surest Help ad Defence In the time of the greatest difficulty and most Imminent danger; Evidenced in the Remarkable Deliverance of divers Persons, From the devouring Waves of the Sea, amongst which they Suffered Shipwrack, And also, From the more cruelly devouring jaws of the inhumane Canibals of Florida. Faithfully related by one of the persons concerned therein, Jonathan Dickinson* (London, 1701). Many scholars in history, anthropology, and literature have utilized the journal in their studies, but surprisingly, an Atlantic treatment of the journal, like that of Dickinson's life, remains unwritten.

losses (at least £300) while bad markets, poor supply, and improper goods continually stymied his efforts to get ahead. Yet, despite his initial hardships, Dickinson developed many important allies who supported his cause in the much larger and much more prominent Quaker community in Philadelphia and abroad. His connections in Jamaica, however, proved to be his greatest asset. The profits from sugar planting often balanced his other accounts, his speculation in Pennsylvanian real estate, and his interests in England.

Dickinson spent several years traveling among Jamaica, Philadelphia, and several other Atlantic ports establishing important trade linkages. Dickinson traded in a vast array of English, European, North American, and West Indian goods, everything from dry goods, spices, sugar, rum, molasses, beeswax, lumber, gunpowder, iron, and enslaved Africans and Indians. In 1702, Dickinson, leaving behind his two eldest children, Jonathan and Joseph, in the care of family friends, Samuel and Rachel Preston, accompanied by his wife and their youngest son, John, returned to Jamaica for what was supposed to be a brief period. Francis Dickinson's death in 1704, however, extended the Dickinsons' stay in Jamaica. Dickinson and his growing family stayed in Jamaica splitting time between the plantations in St. Elizabeth Parish, the house in Spanish Town, and the merchant business in Port Royal. Dickinson and his brother, Caleb, co-managed the family business after their father's death. Under Dickinson's watchful eye, his sugar planting and trans-Atlantic trade, particularly that with Philadelphia, prospered. After many arduous years, Dickinson recovered from the substantial losses associated with the shipwreck of 1696 and his initial mercantile failures in Philadelphia. Dickinson was eager to return to Philadelphia with his growing family to enjoy the fruits of his labor.

Mary gave birth to her first daughter while in Jamaica and was pregnant with a fifth child when Dickinson and his family left Jamaica for the last time, aboard the ironically named ship, *Happy Return*, in the spring of 1709.

Dickinson's final Atlantic journey was as perilous as his first. After being blown off course near Cuba, French privateers commandeered Dickinson's ship. The French privateers took Dickinson, his pregnant wife, their two adolescent children, and a prominent Quaker, Thomas Story, to the north shore of Saint Domingue where they confiscated the ship and its contents. Dickinson's time as a captive in the French West Indies fundamentally changed his world-view. While at Léogane, the Dickinsons were treated kindly and were free to go about town. During his meanderings Dickinson witnessed a need for trade in Saint Domingue. He developed some connections and began trading to the island shortly after his arrival in Philadelphia. Despite losing another small fortune in ship and cargo, Dickinson left Saint Domingue after a month. He travelled to Martinique, and then to Guadeloupe, where Mary gave birth to Hannah, Dickinson's fifth child and second daughter. She was the last of Dickinson's children: two born in Jamaica, one in Guadeloupe, and two in Philadelphia. Dickinson eventually made it back to Philadelphia via Antigua but not before developing relationships with prominent Quakers on that island.

When Dickinson returned to Philadelphia, he was no longer a neophyte merchant. He had traveled and traded widely; he had survived several harrowing experiences; and he had developed a reputation among the Friends of Philadelphia. From 1710 until his death in 1722, Dickinson remained in Philadelphia and continued expanding his commercial and political influence. During this period, Dickinson embarked on a

significant political and mercantile career significantly influencing the commercial and political policies of the growing mid-Atlantic port city. Dickinson continued to trade on a broad scale with England, Madeira, Jamaica, Curacao, Saint Domingue, Surinam, and Antigua importing and exporting an extremely diverse variety of goods, including haberdashery, cloth, bread, flour, sugar, rum, molasses, pork, rice, Indian corn, books, manufactured goods, and enslaved Africans.

To the dismay of some but not all Philadelphian Quakers, Dickinson was Philadelphia's largest single slaveholder and one of the most active slave-traders in Pennsylvania during the first two decades of the eighteenth century.<sup>14</sup> Dickinson, along with a small cohort of West-Indian Quaker merchants, advanced the institution of slavery, set the parameters for the trade, influenced legislation regulating enslaved Africans, and contended with the uncertain labor market in the Delaware River Valley. Dickinson's vision of the Pennsylvania labor market, the subject of Chapter Five, was quite different from the image painted by the many scholars who argue that Philadelphia was a relative beacon of equality and prosperity during the eighteenth century.

Well before his death in 1722, Dickinson frequently suffered from terrible bouts of gout. He occasionally spent months at a time in poor health. Nevertheless, he continued to play an active role in the management of his family plantations in Jamaica and his vast ownership of property in Pennsylvania.<sup>15</sup> Inconsistent growing years in the West Indies, poor sugar markets in England, unreliable sources and markets in Pennsylvania, and over-speculation in real estate plagued Dickinson's finances. Despite

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<sup>14</sup> At one point in the 1710s, Dickinson owned more than thirty enslaved Africans, more than double that of any other prominent merchants in Pennsylvania.

<sup>15</sup> Dickinson owned more than two-dozen properties in Pennsylvania and spent at least £5,000 on real estate during the first two decades of the eighteenth century.

having close to £10,000 in tangible assets, Dickinson died nearly £4,000 in debt. His deepest sorrow, however, arose from the death of his wife in 1719 and the subsequent misadventures of his children, tragedies from which he never seemed to fully recover. After Dickinson's death, a lengthy legal battle, the subject of Chapter Six, ensued over the settlement of this trans-Atlantic estate. This legal battle between Dickinson's sons and the executors of his will lasted several decades. The episode that eventually outlasted all of Dickinson's immediate family and two of three executors reveals the complexities of trans-Atlantic estate management. The richness of the legal case adds greatly to our understanding of Dickinson, his family, and the nature of trans-Atlantic commerce in the early eighteenth century.

Needless to say Dickinson was a very interesting figure. His importance, however, derives from much more than the complexity of the events of his life. The trials and travails of Dickinson are much more than an aberrant and interesting story. While a number of Dickinson's circumstances may be atypical, Dickinson illustrates an important representation of early Anglo-Atlantic peoples. Dickinson's life spanned a formative and transitional period of the Anglo-Atlantic world. He often found himself in precarious yet defining circumstances. He not only mixed with leading elements of Philadelphia society, but his Atlantic network of friends, co-religionists, and acquaintances stretched from England, the African coast, the northern coast of South America, throughout the Caribbean, and all along the entire North American Atlantic seaboard. The events of his life involved a multitude of Atlantic world peoples: English, French, Spanish, Dutch, African, and Native American. His fortune and misfortune was created by the opportunities and hindrances of operating across vast geographical spaces during a period

of great uncertainty, change, and exponential, yet inconsistent, growth. There are very few figures historians can study that so perfectly illustrate the lived reality of the early-eighteenth century Atlantic world.

Dickinson provides us an opportunity to examine the development of what became the greatest English Caribbean colony, Jamaica, at a time when nothing was certain about Jamaica's future. He furnishes us with an opportunity to explore the complexities of a zone of international interaction along a European frontier, Florida, at a time when all parties involved—Spanish, English, French, and Native American—were being forced to define and redefine themselves and their relationships with one another in North America. He offers us an opportunity to examine Philadelphia during its origins in a period when Quakers were forced to reconcile their material gains with their religious sentiments, when Quakers dominated Pennsylvania politics, and when they developed countless trans-Atlantic connections that launched Philadelphia to the heights of North America's premier mercantile port.

A study of Dickinson also gives us a chance to explore a conflicted man. Dickinson was a slave owner and trader; he was a Jamaican planter and Philadelphia merchant; he was a father and a businessman; he was a captive and an ambassador; he was a wealthy merchant and a destitute county court clerk; he was a politician and a businessman; and, as a pious Quaker, Dickinson was driven by self-interest but also forced to reconcile his many interests and differences with his religious sensibilities. The actions and repercussions of Dickinson's trans-Atlantic life are the threads that weave this dissertation together.

Dickinson's death in 1722 provides a stopping point for this dissertation. Serendipitously the British Atlantic world was a completely changed entity by this time. The 1720s saw a distinctive change in Atlantic life as many of the mercantile and planting ventures Dickinson was involved with started to really become profitable. Dickinson is our main character but the time in which he lived is our main subject.

### **Why study this time period?**

At the turn of the eighteenth century, the Anglo-Atlantic colonies suffered from economic and political growing pains, religious discord, a number of international wars, rampant piracy, natural disasters, slave revolts, Indian wars, increasing economic and political constraints from the mother country, and the effects of the evolving disease environment. Surprisingly, historians dedicate relatively little attention to the middle years of colonial American history; and, therefore the historiography of the entire Anglo-Atlantic world around the turn of the eighteenth century suffers from a lack of sustained scholarship. Despite the possibilities offered by this interestingly complicated period relatively little work has been done to explicitly explain the social, economic, and political transformations apparent at the turn of the eighteenth century. The question is why do historians generally disregard this period?

Several historians have offered suggestions as to why this period receives relatively little attention. Jack Greene suggests that 'early American historians have long appreciated the extent to which the decades on either side of 1700 were a time of special difficulty for the colonies' and that these years 'represented a low point in the exertion of the expansive energies of the settlers.'<sup>16</sup> Trevor Burnard supports that suggestion: 'one

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<sup>16</sup> Jack Greene, *The Intellectual Construction of America. Exceptionalism and Identity from 1492 to 1800* (Chapel Hill, 1993), p. 65.



reason for this comparative neglect might be that the years between 1675 and 1720 were years of particular difficulty for British settlement in the Americas.<sup>17</sup> Richard Dunn contends that ‘the expectations the English brought with them and the physical conditions they encountered in the islands [particularly Jamaica and Barbados] produced a hectic mode of life that had no counterpart.’<sup>18</sup> Natalie Zacek argues, in her recent study of the Leeward Islands, that ‘as the seventeenth century drew toward its end, the Leewards remained small, crude, frontier societies that seems unpromising to potential settlers and investors alike.’<sup>19</sup> More recently, Bernard Bailyn has characterized the early part of this period as ‘the barbarous years’ of American history.<sup>20</sup> While a pervasive sense of decline enveloped the writings of contemporaries, these scholars suggest that this sense of decline is also evident in the writing of modern historians.<sup>21</sup> Yet, these are a very few amongst many who articulate this perspective.

Burnard also suggests ‘another reason for this comparative neglect of this period might be that the sources for studying this period are relatively limited.’<sup>22</sup> Yet, while researching this project, it became evident that limiting my inquiry to documents written exclusively to and from Dickinson was the only way to keep the amount of documentation digestible for a singular study. True, some of the sources utilised for this dissertation are fragmentary and disjointed but there are ample primary sources from the early eighteenth century that remain unexamined. In the end, the source material for

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<sup>17</sup> Burnard, ‘Death Valley to Sunlit Uplands’, (unpublished paper, 2010).

<sup>18</sup> Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, p. 45.

<sup>19</sup> Natalie Zacek, *Settler Society in the English Leeward Islands. 1670-1776* (Cambridge, 2010), p. 64.

<sup>20</sup> Bernard Bailyn, *The Barbarous Years. The Peopling of British North America. The Conflict of Civilizations, 1600-1675*, (New York, 2012).

<sup>21</sup> Burnard, ‘Death Valley to Sunlit Uplands’

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

studying Dickinson and his Atlantic world is extremely rich. By virtue of Dickinson's vast trans-Atlantic endeavors, documentation regarding Dickinson's affairs is strewn across the periphery of the Atlantic Ocean particularly in archives in England and Pennsylvania.

The bulk of Dickinson's personal correspondence is located in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Having died in Philadelphia in 1722 and garnering a considerable reputation during his lifetime as a result of his mercantile prowess and literary fame, Dickinson's documents found their way into the holdings of a prominent Philadelphia family, the Logans. The Historical Society of Pennsylvania and the Library Company Philadelphia collectively hold more than 1,000 of Dickinson's personal and professional letters. The Library Company of Philadelphia also holds a considerable number of editions of Dickinson's most famous historical piece, his journal of his captivity in Florida, published as *God's Protecting Providence*. Several manuscript versions of the journal are held at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania as well. These editions provide the source material for this interesting and instructive episode along Florida's east coast. The Historical Society of Pennsylvania also holds a significant number of other documents regarding Dickinson's estate, including several family wills, a number of business ledgers, and a few account books. These documents provide insights into both his estates in Jamaica, as well as his vast trading endeavors based out of Philadelphia. In England, the National Archives provide the majority of source material for treating Dickinson's early life in Jamaica. Official correspondence, governmental reports, and other colonial documents housed in the Colonial Office Series inform much of my discussion of Dickinson's Jamaica. Newspapers, correspondence from Dickinson

counterparts, and secondary literature touching on a multitude of Atlantic world topics round out the source base for this dissertation.

Returning to the question as to why historians generally ignore the turn of the eighteenth century, Burnard further contends that this period ‘meets with such bad press’ because ‘there are few heroes to celebrate, no founders to compare with men who settled Massachusetts or even Virginia and no idealistic challengers to British rule that can be found in the revolutionary period.’<sup>23</sup> While in some instances these charges may be true, this study of Dickinson’s Atlantic world proposes otherwise. Furthermore, what the period lacks in heroes, it makes up in content. The apparently average, mundane, routine, and ‘everydayness’ of Dickinson’s life is the essence of this study. Understanding Dickinson’s world, his connections, and his struggle to survive in the malaise of the early-eighteenth-century Atlantic world is fundamental to our understanding of major historical turning points. The period provides many opportunities to explore how colonists consolidated both political and economic power as the Anglo-Atlantic colonies rose from the ashes of the late-seventeenth century.

Consequently, histories of the American colonies, the British Caribbean, and the British Atlantic may essentially be divided into two categories. The first, and most exhaustive kind of study is the study of the founding of the North American colonies and their place within the history of the British Empire or early America.<sup>24</sup> The study of the

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> For example: Andrews, Kenneth Andrews, *Trade, Plunder and Settlement. Maritime Enterprise and the Genesis of the British Empire, 1480-1630* (Cambridge, 1984); David Cressy, *Coming Over. Migration and Communication between England and New England in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, 1987); Allison Games, *Migration and the Origins of the English Atlantic World* (Cambridge, 2001); David Hancock *Citizens of the World: London Merchants and the Integration of the British Atlantic Community*,

period after 1750, firmly entrenched in the years of controversy that preceded the American War of Independence also garners much more attention than this uncertain and transformative period at the turn of the eighteenth century. These particular trends are perplexing because they both appear to work backward from seemingly inevitable conclusions. Many works on colonial America tend to promote the idea of a unique American identity by exploring and emphasising what was ‘exceptional’ about the thirteen American colonies. Other studies, tied up in imperial-driven histories, seek to expound upon the grandeur of the British Atlantic Empire by examining the colonies and the mother country’s rise to prominence.

At the most elemental level, periodisation underlines the arguments of this dissertation. I am arguing that we should examine this transformative period during the years from 1655 to 1725 in order to bridge the gap between these two avenues of historical inquiry. It is no longer intellectually sustainable to treat the origins of the ‘glory days’ of the Anglo-Atlantic world without considering this most fundamental period of change and development. It may be argued that all historically constructed periods are transformative in some way. This dissertation, however, will illustrate that the Anglo-Atlantic colonies, and, for that matter, the view of the colonies from the metropole was one thing in the mid-seventeenth century, and it was something all together different by the beginning of the 1730s. For example, Jamaica was no longer a struggling adolescent colony governed by military-men, pirates, and inexperienced

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1735-1785 (Cambridge, 1997); Carla Pestana, *Protestant Empire. Religion and the Making of the British Atlantic World* (Philadelphia, 2009).

planters. During this period it became an emerging leader of the English colonial endeavor. In the 1730s, Jamaica was a proper colonial plantation society with an established elite and a growing body of enslaved Africans. By the 1730s, Philadelphia was no longer a nascent port town. Instead, Philadelphia represented North America's premier Atlantic port with connections in the West Indies, Africa, and England. Furthermore, as a result of this increased production and consolidation of power in England, imperial-minded men viewed the colonies as exploitable assets, which needed to be reined into the control of the metropolitan officials.

All this considered, some scholars contend that during the early eighteenth century the Anglo-Atlantic colonies underwent massive transformations. More than two decades ago, Ian Steele skillfully argued that 'between 1675 and 1740 the development of communications encouraged, accompanied, and resulted from the creation of an English Atlantic economic, political, and social community'.<sup>25</sup> Steele's 'shared experience' provided the foundation for a proliferation of Anglo-Atlantic world studies that sought to illustrate connections across the Atlantic Basin. Decades later, the idea that change was driven by directives from the mother country has begun to wane but many scholars still argue that in colonial societies,

at the extreme peripheries of English civilianization, the one certain measure of achievement was the standards of the metropolitan center, and colonists everywhere manifested a strong predisposition to reinforce their claims to an English identity by cultivating metropolitan values and imitating metropolitan cultural forms, institutions, and patterns of behaviour.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Steele, *The English Atlantic*, p. 278.

<sup>26</sup> Greene, *The Intellectual Construction of America*, p. 66.

Nevertheless, more nuanced approaches to the Anglo-Atlantic continue to emerge. Historians, searching for a more lucid explanation of Atlantic peoples' actions, have begun to examine 'stories of individual prosperity' in order to explain how the acquisition of wealth and influence allowed the Anglo-Atlantic colonies to become lucrative and integrated parts of a whole.<sup>27</sup>

Individual stories may not tell the entire story of the many trends of this period that proved to be so important in the reshaping of the contours of early American and Anglo-Atlantic history. Typically, both micro and macro studies tend to focus solely on the 'successes' of the Atlantic world by highlighting the experiences of exceptional figures or exceptional places within the British Atlantic Empire. Yet, England, prior to 1697, did not have a clearly defined imperial policy. More importantly, as Nicholas Canny argues, Great Britain, as a political entity, did not even exist until 1707. Moreover, a sense and definition of 'Britishness' remained elusive in the constitutive parts of the new United Kingdom, never mind the colonies, 3,000 miles across the Atlantic Ocean. Thereafter, it took British policy-makers years to develop a strategy to contend with the dynamic nature of its widely dispersed overseas possessions and even longer to attempt to employ any concrete strategies, laws, or regulations to govern those places.<sup>28</sup> Undoubtedly, internal conflicts in England about the nature of the monarchy and the role of Parliament at the close of the seventeenth century retarded the development of a coherent colonial policy.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Zacek, *Settler Society*, p. 65

<sup>28</sup> Nicholas Canny, 'Introduction', in Nicolas Canny (ed.), *The Origins of Empire. British Overseas Enterprise to the Close of the Seventeenth Century* (Oxford, 1997), p. 1.

<sup>29</sup> See Tim Harris, *Revolution. The Great Crisis of the British Monarch, 1685-1720* (London, 2006); Steve Pincus, *1688, The First Modern Revolution* (New Haven, 2009).

This period, if any, offers an opportunity to study the development of ‘Atlantic culture’ not an Anglo-Atlantic, or Franco-, or Spanish-Atlantic. European conflict with Native Americans and the importation of enslaved Africans forced all three parties involved, Native, European, and African to reevaluate both their sense of self and also the nature of an increasingly dynamic Atlantic society. It is important to remember that even though Native Americans were declining in total number, their role in this transitional period was anything but mute.<sup>30</sup> This period offers an opportunity to study how the everyday experiences of ordinary people shaped the development of the Anglo-Atlantic world. Historians cannot discuss the development of the Anglo-Atlantic colonies without considering the role of Native Americans, Africans, and other Europeans.

The initial impetus for my doctoral research was to understand how and why the socio-economic developments of the late eighteenth century occurred. Why did Great Britain rise to prominence? Why was the trajectory of the colonies decidedly upward? In essence, what made the Anglo-Atlantic world so successful? In pursuing this end, however, it became evident that by seeking out antecedents of the glory of the British Atlantic Empire I had fallen into the same trap as my predecessors. This teleological approach forced me to unjustly categorise the peoples of North America, the Caribbean, and Africa and their interactions into a category of something that did not exist—‘Britishness.’ Therefore, by treating Atlantic history within national boundaries I would be forced to imply that not only were the Anglo-Atlantic peoples and their colonies exceptional but also that individual successes, and by extension the successes of the

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<sup>30</sup> Daniel Richter, *Facing East From Indian Country. A Native History of Early America* (Cambridge, 2001).

British Empire, were bound to outstrip other European colonial projects in both size and wealth.

Therefore, in order to illustrate a more complete picture of the early eighteenth century Atlantic world, I needed to reconcile four facts. First, the growth and prosperity of the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries was not inevitable. Second, failures and disconnections, as much as successes and connections, contributed to the transformations of the early-eighteenth century. Third, individuals on the ground vying for their own survival drove this process of growth. Finally, individuals and their interactions with various other Europeans, Native Americans, and Africans, created the essence of Atlantic world history: diverse interactions, propelled by local circumstances and self-preservation, without an overstated emphasis on connectivity and metropolitan norms.

While contemporaries suggested that ‘the very simplicity and crudeness’ of colonial societies ‘seem to have fed a residual fear of the corrosive effects of the wilderness environment.’ Greene, citing Louis Wright, argues that there was always the possibility that colonists would ‘become either so absorbed in the business of making a living...or so overcome by cultural isolation from the larger Anglophone world that their societies would “insensibly decline.”’<sup>31</sup> He further suggests that ‘the last decades of the seventeenth century through the first decades of the eighteenth century the colonies appeared to be in the trough of cultural decline’.<sup>32</sup> Consequently, I argue here that this ‘failure,’ relative to metropolitan standards, engendered many tangible opportunities for personal and colonial growth. Therefore, colonists negotiated the uncertainties of the

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<sup>31</sup> Greene, *The Intellectual Construction of America*, p. 67

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.



period by making, as Greene suggests, an ‘adjustment of inherited forms and practices to make them congruent with local conditions’. This adjustment proved to be their greatest asset.<sup>33</sup> Still further, this type of ‘creolisation’ should be viewed, as John Smolenski argues, as not only adaptive but also ‘creative and generative.’ In essence, through this creative process, ‘individuals and groups constructed new cultural habits and identities as they tried to make Old-World inheritances “fit” in the New-World environment.’<sup>34</sup> In the process, however, they engaged in various interactions, adaptations, and incorporations that engendered something altogether different from metropolitan norms.

Undoubtedly, life along the Atlantic Ocean during this period was complicated by uncertainty; therefore, creativity, based on local circumstances, was the only way to survive. Uncertainty, failure, disconnections, just as much if not more so as, certainty, success, and connectivity, provided many avenues for advancement. Moreover, during this period these avenues were consistently inconsistent, and did not necessarily follow neat national boundaries, well-travelled trade routes, or formalised patterns of exchange that existed later in the century. Here then the paradigm of Atlantic history, encapsulating many geographic regions and their peoples, proves indispensable.

### **Why use an Atlantic framework?**

Carole Shammas suggests that for the proponents of the field, ‘Atlantic history carries fewer presuppositions about cultural hierarchies, [and] displays more openness to multidirectional effects of cross-cultural interactions.’<sup>35</sup> I am further suggesting that for

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<sup>33</sup> Greene, *Pursuits of Happiness. The Social Development of the Early Modern British Colonies and the Formation of American Culture* (Chapel Hill, 1988), p. 169.

<sup>34</sup> John Smolenski, *Friends and Strangers. The Making of Creole Culture in Colonial Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia, 2010), pp. 4-5, 302.

<sup>35</sup> Carole Shammas, ‘Introduction’, in Elizabeth Mancke and Carole Shammas (eds), *The Creation of the British Atlantic World* (Baltimore, 2005), p. 2

this specific period it is a particularly effective tool to recover the international character of the Anglo-Atlantic world. Atlantic history should involve, as Bernard Bailyn so eloquently puts it:

a creative shift in orientation, from nationalistic, longitudinal, and teleological structures toward 'horizontal', trans-national, trans-imperial, and multicultural view as the mind's eye sweeps laterally across the past's contemporary world rather than forward to its later outcomes.<sup>36</sup>

It must also be, as John Elliott suggests, viewed as a process of 'creation, destruction, and re-creation of communities as a result of movement, across and around the Atlantic basin, of people, commodities, cultural practices, and values,' in various place during different periods of interaction.<sup>37</sup>

The explanatory power and suggestive implications created by the vision of the Atlantic region as a coherent whole are promising. The interconnectedness of the Atlantic world colonies, however, should not be taken for granted. As Europeans scattered into all the accessible parts of the Atlantic world as merchants, seamen, missionaries, scholars, posted army officials, government officials, and errant wanderers they discovered that experiences in one region could not be replicated in another. Those experiences, however, certainly influenced subsequent interactions and decision-making.<sup>38</sup> The sea and coastal towns around the Atlantic Ocean became places where

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<sup>36</sup> Bernard Bailyn, 'Introduction, Reflections on Some Major Themes', in Bernard Bailyn and Patricia L. Denault (eds), *Soundings in Atlantic History. Latent Structures and Intellectual Currents, 1500-1830* (Cambridge, 2009), p.2

<sup>37</sup> John Elliott, 'Afterword, Atlantic History, A Circumnavigation', in David Armitage and Michael J. Braddick (eds), *The British Atlantic World, 1500-1800* (New York, 2002) p. 239.

<sup>38</sup> Bailyn, 'Introduction, Reflections of Some Major Themes', in *Sounds in Atlantic History*, p. 4.

people of different classes, races, and religions intermingled. Enslaved Africans, Native Americans, indentured servants, ship crews, incorrigible governors, unqualified posted officials, indifferent proprietors, as well as, merchants and planters preoccupied with finding the best price, made for unruly subjects for all European governments.<sup>39</sup> These individuals constituted a variety of multinational zones that interacted in a myriad of different cultural and socio-economic circumstances that varied according to time and place. David Hancock reminds us that ‘it is important to remember that most people came to the colonies as a part of a maritime endeavor, trading company, plantations complex, or social, religious, or ethno-cultural group rather than as an instrument of an European nation-state strategy.’<sup>40</sup>

With this dynamic population and its various personal and professional objectives, the Anglo-Atlantic world at the turn of the eighteenth century was far from integrated. English-speaking people, and for that matter everyone, in this era dwelled in a chaotic and uncertain world where new exigencies overpowered custom. Alison Games suggests that only by ignoring the particularities of different colonial societies, which were defined and altered by the presence of Native American and African populations and the proximity of Spanish, French, and Dutch colonies, may one see these colonial

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<sup>39</sup> Jack Greene and Philip D. Morgan, ‘Introduction, The Present State of Atlantic History’, in Jack Green and Philip D. Morgan (eds), *Atlantic History. A Critical Appraisal* (Oxford, 2009), pp. 4-5.

<sup>40</sup> David Hancock, ‘The Triumphs of Mercury. Connection and Control in the Emerging Atlantic Economy,’ in *Soundings in Atlantic History*, pp. 112-40. David Hancock, *Oceans of Wine. Madeira and the Emergence of American Trade and Taste* (New Haven, 2009). Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker (eds), *The Many Headed Hydra: Sailors, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (Boston, 2000), p. 2.

societies as English.<sup>41</sup> The peopling of England's colonies by the inhabitants of four continents produced a heterogeneity that most fully signified what it meant to live in an Atlantic world. This world was built on the ground and over the water, not in the dreams of proprietors, investors, or schemers in England. It involved 'the recruitment of a wide variety of peoples, their interactions, their conflicts, their partial absorptions, and their creation of new cultures' that were no longer confined to the receiving end of trans-Atlantic culture but helped to define it.<sup>42</sup>

In defining this world, individuals took on the herculean tasks of clearing the land, draining the swamps, developing agriculture, domesticating livestock, and establishing commerce by creating self-organising networks that by the isolated nature of the colonies were decentralised.<sup>43</sup> Both local circumstances and larger trends across the Atlantic basin guided the creation, maintenance, and destruction of these networks. David Hancock suggests that with an increase in the scale of transatlantic trade structures, decision-making and implementation were dispersed, often situated close to the action, and only loosely directed by governments in Europe and the colonies.<sup>44</sup> Thus, people in the colonies were left to their own initiatives when developing connections.

Individuals, sorting through personal endeavors, thoughtfully maintained these personal trans-Atlantic relationships. It is important to remember, however, that while linkages, connections, and foundations of the British Atlantic took shape during this period, these connective strands were also tenuous, ephemeral, and required active

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<sup>41</sup> Alison Games, *Migration and the Origins of the English Atlantic World* (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 11-12.

<sup>42</sup> Bailyn and Morgan, 'Introduction', in Bernard Bailyn and Philip D. Morgan (eds), *Strangers within the Realm. Cultural Margins of the First British Empire* (Chapel Hill, 1991), p. 31. Shamas, 'Introduction', in *The Creation of the British Atlantic*, p. 3.

<sup>43</sup> Linebaugh and Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra*, pp. 1-7.

<sup>44</sup> Hancock, 'The Triumphs of Mercury', p. 114.

maintenance by all parties involved: individuals, social groups, and states. Burnard, commenting on the nature of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, suggests that ‘networks, transatlantic connections, cosmopolitan attitudes, and flux and mobility can be as destructive as they are creative.’<sup>45</sup> An investigation of the creation, maintenance, and destruction of transatlantic relationships will provide valuable insights into how the early eighteenth-century Atlantic world functioned on both local and larger Atlantic levels.

Recent studies, such as David Hancock’s work on Madeira and Michael Jarvis’s work on Bermudian trade, illustrate the possibilities of examining oceanic connections across the Atlantic world.<sup>46</sup> Jarvis skillfully illustrates how humble sailors and seafaring slaves operating small family-owned vessels were significant but underappreciated agents of Atlantic integration. Hancock, on the other hand, painstakingly reconstructs the lives of Madeira-wine producers, distributors, and consumers, as well as the economic and social structures created by globalising commerce, to reveal the intricate interplay between individuals and market forces. In both instances these scholars offer new perspectives on the economic and social development of the Atlantic world by challenging traditional interpretations that have identified states and empires as the driving force behind trade. In essence, the work of these two scholars inspired this examination of Dickinson’s Atlantic world to further articulate how decentralisation provided opportunities for early Anglo-Atlantic peoples to develop self-organised systems that worked across imperial lines.

Studying the entirety of Atlantic history, however, is nearly impossible. The creation of separate ‘Atlantic worlds’ is a fundamental necessity because of the character

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<sup>45</sup> Burnard, ‘Death Valley to Sunlit Uplands’.

<sup>46</sup> Hancock, *Oceans of Wine*; Michael J. Jarvis, *In the Eye of All Trade. Bermuda, Bermudians, and the Maritime Atlantic World, 1680-1783* (Chapel Hill, 2010).

of colonialism. The reasons for colonisation, circumstances both at home and abroad, and the relationship between colony and mother country differed according to the parties involved: European, Native American, and African. The contemporary advantages, disadvantages, opportunities, and misfortunes of operating in different realms within the Atlantic illustrate that the early Atlantic was a dynamic milieu in which local and personal circumstances guided the actions of its people. The people and their trans-national experiences bound the Atlantic world together. Scholars must remember that colonial edicts, treaties, trade regulations, and other crown policies often sought to divide people into neat ethnic, religious, or national categories, of which those being categorised may or may not have paid much credence.<sup>47</sup>

Like these contemporary measures, critics of Atlantic history criticize historians in the field for dividing their histories into neat national categories while at the same time suggesting that a lack of cohesiveness between colonies makes it difficult to speak with any confidence about an Atlantic system. Failing to transcend national boundaries has led critics to argue that Atlantic history is simply a repackaging of national or imperial histories. John Elliott argues that historical compartmentalisation, partly because of the immensity of the task involved in mastering vast quantities of information in a variety of languages and partly because the contrasts between the experiences of its constituent parts are so striking, make any attempt to treat the various parts of the Atlantic world in unison difficult.<sup>48</sup> The early eighteenth century, a critical period of change, crisis, and socioeconomic, and political solidification, however, provides an opportunity to study

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<sup>47</sup> Linebaugh and Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra*, p. 33.

<sup>48</sup> Elliott, 'Introduction. Colonial Identity in the Atlantic World', in Nicholas Canny and Anthony Pagden (eds), *Colonial Identity in the Atlantic World, 1500-1800* (Princeton, 1987), p. 3

Atlantic history before national boundaries, at least in North America and the Caribbean colonies, were clearly defined.

Another charge leveled against Atlantic history is that a focus on those lands bordering the Atlantic Ocean deflects attention away from inland populations and their role in the Atlantic world. Furthermore, with an explicitly Atlantic focus, historians seeking to illustrate the connections that tied the various areas of the Atlantic together do so at the expense of the development within discrete areas without much concern about how those connections and trans-national relations affected the internal histories of the areas they connected.<sup>49</sup> One cannot study the early-eighteenth-century Atlantic world without giving due attention to inland populations, particularly Native Americans. Native Americans were clearly abreast of trans-Atlantic trends and European political maneuvers and used this trans-Atlantic awareness to their advantage in becoming active players in the developing Atlantic world. Amy Bushnell suggests because Atlantic history focuses on ‘European and African Atlantic-crossers’, the settlers occupy the stage and the ‘natives stand in the wings’.<sup>50</sup> Native Americans must no longer be the understudies of the Atlantic history, she suggests. Although they did not ply the Atlantic Ocean, Native Americans and Europeans created, as Daniel Richter suggests, an ‘empire of goods’ knitting together their collective fortunes.<sup>51</sup>

With these considerations in mind, Atlantic history does not have to be a repackaged version of imperial history. By stepping beyond national Atlantic studies,

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<sup>49</sup> Greene and Morgan, ‘Introduction. The Present State of Atlantic History’, in *Atlantic History*, pp. 5-7.

<sup>50</sup> Amy Turner Bushnell, ‘Indigenous America and the Atlantic World’, in Greene and Morgan, *Atlantic History*, p. 212.

<sup>51</sup> Daniel Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country. A Native American History of Early America*, (Cambridge, 2001), p. 174

this work considers a set of shifting Atlantic worlds. By examining various spheres of interactions, this study will reveal that gain for individuals, colonies, or social groups at large, often outweighed imperial policy in individual decision-making. It may also demonstrate that personal relationships based on coincidence and religious or familial connections also heavily guided decision-making in the early-eighteenth-century Atlantic world.

During the latter half of the seventeenth century, England's Atlantic colonies, both in North America and the West Indies, faced several options that would lead toward success or failure. They might develop into commercial ports, plantation societies, or hubs of manufacturing; their particular trajectories were based on how their populations integrated into the developing trans-Atlantic colony, the available natural resources, the proximity of Native Americans, and the influx of enslaved African laborers. The following chapters discuss the socio-economic divergence of these colonies prior to their integration or disintegration in the British Empire of the eighteenth century. Regionality and proximity to other European colonies affected the development of the British colonies in distinct ways. The relationships with Native Americans and the importation of Africans influenced the economic and political agendas of the colonies. Individuals and their own self-interest influenced the varied nature of the colonies' internal development and their relationships with other British and non-British colonies. But how connected were disparate parts of the Atlantic world and how dynamic were those connections? What was involved in the creation of those connections and the destruction of others? Is relative dependency of each colony upon one another only recognisable as an anachronistic projection of modern historians, or was it as Frederick Tolles posits 'an



almost everyday experience of English speaking people of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries?’<sup>52</sup>

Map 1: Dickinson’s Atlantic World



## Chapter Outline

Following the life trajectory of Jonathan Dickinson, the chapters of this dissertation are organised both topically and temporally. Chapter Two, ‘Growing up Jamaican’, explores

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<sup>52</sup> Frederick B. Tolles, *Quakers and the Atlantic Culture* (New York, 1960), p. 3.

the foundations of English Jamaica from the English conquest (1655) through the Port Royal earthquake (1692). The focal point of this chapter, however, is the 1690s. By examining the major problems that Anglo-Jamaicans faced during the 1690s, this chapter sheds light on an understudied period of Jamaican historiography through an exploration of a substantial period of socio-economic, political, and demographic growing pains. This chapter discusses that impact of international war and alliance making, internal squabbles—turned rebellion, weather, piracy, epidemics, threats of slavery, and religious persecution. Ultimately, this chapter argues that Dickinson, forced to make a contingency plan for the uncertainty of Jamaica, relocated to the infant Pennsylvanian colony to buoy his family's fortunes before they sunk into the uncertain abyss of late-seventeenth-century Jamaica.

Chapter Three, 'Shipwrecked in the Atlantic', departs structurally from the previous chapter. This chapter addresses Dickinson's most famous and well-studied historical episode, his shipwreck along Florida's east coast during the fall of 1696. For decades, Dickinson's journal, published as *God's Protecting Providence*, has provided the singular English language insight into European and Native American interaction along Florida's southeastern coast during the late-seventeenth century. This chapter examines this complicated event by addressing how the various historical actors, European, African, and Native American, reacted to their interactions with one another. Dickinson, like his African and Native American counterparts, was forced to develop contingency for other unforeseen events during the preceding two-month journey from present-day Jupiter Island to Spanish Saint Augustine. This chapter presents Florida as an integral part of the Atlantic world while demonstrating that local circumstances often

superseded larger Atlantic currents. More specifically, this chapter argues that a Native American awareness of the larger Atlantic world provided advantages that Native American groups utilised to maintain autonomy, as they became active players in the European struggle for control of the American Southeast. Examining the relationship between Native Americans, different Europeans, and Africans in an area dominated by Native Americans will provide insight into how power and identity were fluid structures along this European frontier during this period.

Chapter Four, 'Negotiating an Uncertain Atlantic Marketplace', examines how Dickinson actively exhausted every viable opportunity to advance his trading ventures despite a myriad of forces working against him. This chapter further contends that Dickinson, along with a small cohort of West-Indian transplants, was largely responsible for initiating, developing, and maintaining one of the most significant trade relationships of the eighteenth century, the exchange between Philadelphia and Jamaica. By examining how Dickinson contended with uncertain markets, poor supply, and inconsistent trade routes, this chapter presents early-Atlantic world traders as opportunistically challenging imperial norms and directives from the mother country as they carved out inter-colonial and inter-imperial relationships. Examining Dickinson's endeavors will provide insight into the trans-national nature of early-eighteenth century Atlantic trade and presents the future of Philadelphia just as uncertainly as that of Jamaica.

Chapter Five, 'Negotiating an Uncertain Atlantic Slave Market', examines a critical and paradoxical aspect of Dickinson trans-Atlantic trading career. By examining Dickinson as Philadelphia's largest single slaveholder and one of the colony's most

prominent slave-traders, the chapter challenges generally accepted ideas that from the start of colonisation Quakers in Pennsylvania were fundamentally opposed to the institution of slavery. This chapter explores the uncertain labor market in early Pennsylvania to reveal that many Quakers, despite their religious sensibilities, eagerly employed enslaved Africans in an effort to propel the colony's growth along the western frontier and across the Atlantic. Ultimately, I am arguing that marketability, supply, quality, and profitability of trading enslaved Africans was more important to Dickinson than any nascent and marginal anti-slavery sentiments expressed by fellow Quakers. This chapter contends that Dickinson's vision of Pennsylvania, shared by many other contemporary Pennsylvanians, was quite different than some historians have supposed.

Chapter Six, 'The Decline of Dickinson's Trans-Atlantic Estate', examines Dickinson's personal and professional hardships during the final years of his life, the 40-year legal battle surrounding his estate, and the estate's eventual disintegration. This chapter provides a counterpoint to the many Atlantic-world histories that emphasise continuity, consistent growth, and increased interconnectivity. In the end, this chapter explores Dickinson's final struggle to contend with the uncertainties of the Atlantic world. More a *dénouement* than a climax, the ordeal reveals several themes about Dickinson's life. First, this chapter seeks to personalize a largely impersonal Atlantic-world narrative. Much of Dickinson's life was characterised by his resolve; yet, his ambition, in many ways, brought about the collapse of all he struggled to keep together. Dickinson's tumultuous personal life at the end of the 1710s affected his ability to effectively manage his trans-Atlantic business. The extension of Dickinson's estate in Pennsylvania, the maintenance of his family, and poor production on his Jamaican estates

created cash-flow problems leaving Dickinson, his children, and the executors of his will in a precarious financial situation. In the final act, the multi-generational struggle to settle Dickinson's debts and the subsequent collapse of his estate serves to close our story of Dickinson's Atlantic world.

Individuals, like Dickinson, made choices and made connections that wove disparate elements of the empire together. These early developments, the connective strands, and the disconnections of this period are the subjects of these chapters of this dissertation. In the end during Dickinson's life, the Atlantic world he functioned within was undergoing fundamental changes. Sometimes he adjusted accordingly to his circumstances. Other times he was unable to contend with larger forces at work throughout the Anglo-Atlantic world. Ultimately, Dickinson and his family paid some of the cost for the English colonies *becoming Atlantic*.

## CHAPTER 2: GROWING UP JAMAICAN

The Dunghill of the Universe, the Refuse of the whole Creation, the Clippings of the Elements, a shapeless pile of Rubbish confus'dly jumbld into an Emblem of the *Chaos*, neglected by Omnipotence when he form'd the World into its admirable Order. The Nursery of Heavens Judgments, where Malignant Seeds of all Pestilence were first gather'd and scatter'd thro' the Regions of the Earth, to Punish Mankind for their Offences. The Place where *Pandora* fill'd her Box, where *Vulcan* Forg'd Joves Thunder-bolts, and that Phaeton, by his rash misguidance of the Sun, scroch'd into a Cinder. The Receptacle of Vagabonds, the Sanctuary of Bankrupts, and the Close-stool for the Purges of our Prisons. As Sickly as a Hospital, as Dangerous as the Plague, as Hot as Hell, and as Wicked as the Devil. Subject to Turnadoes, Hurricanes, and Earthquakes, as if the island, like the People, were troubled with the *Dry Belly-Ach*.<sup>1</sup>

In 1698, Edward (Ned) Ward, a popular English writer and perhaps the first early-modern tabloid journalist, published a satirical piece (quoted above) critiquing the many unscrupulous promotional techniques aimed at recruiting people to settle the Anglo-American colonies.<sup>2</sup> Ward's waggish characterisation of Jamaica not only critiqued how authors glazed over the dismal conditions in the colonies but also typified a prevailing

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<sup>1</sup> Edward Ward, *A Trip to Jamaica. With a True Character of the People and Island* (London, 1700), p. 14.

<sup>2</sup> Ward based this piece on a supposed trip to Port Royal, Jamaica in 1687 but direct evidence for the trip has yet to be discovered. Richard Dunn suggests that the piece was based entirely on secondary sources. Ward's, *A Trip to Jamaica*, appeared in at least seven editions and six within the first year. Capitalizing on the work's initial success, Ward expanded into a series of similarly styled trip-accounts covering New England, (which he did not visit as well), Islington, Sadler's Wells, Bath, and Stourbridge. Richard Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves. The Rise of the Planter Class in the English West Indies, 1624-1713* (Chapel Hill, 1972), p. 149.

metropolitan view of the colonies.<sup>3</sup> Richard Dunn suggests that after fifty years of English occupation, Jamaica ‘had become a bad joke.’<sup>4</sup> While Ward’s sardonic caricatures painted the colonies as unruly and uncivilized, he touched on many deep-seeded and tangible issues faced by Anglo-Jamaican settlers at the end of the seventeenth century.<sup>5</sup> Foreign wars and invasions, organised violence by freebooters, slave unrest, unstable labor forces, inconsistent growing seasons, local and trans-Atlantic political discord, devastation by natural disasters, and the steady erosion of life by disease were ever-present throughout the Caribbean during the colonial period.<sup>6</sup> Unfortunately for Anglo-Jamaicans and their enslaved Africans, all these malignancies converged during the 1690s, nearly bringing about the collapse of the island’s tenuous socio-economic and political structures.

The drama of the 1690s climaxed with the great Port Royal earthquake in 1692.<sup>7</sup> Contemporaries suggested that the divinely-inspired earthquake ‘threw down almost all

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<sup>3</sup> Richard Dunn, working from E.G.R. Taylor’s *Late Tudor and Early Stuart Geography, 1583-1605* (New York, 1934) calculated that sixty-eight works were published describing the Caribbean, Guiana, or the Spanish Main, forty-two of which appeared before 1607. Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, p. 23.

<sup>4</sup> Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, p. 149.

<sup>5</sup> John E. Crowley suggests that ‘before the 1750s people in Britain...showed little need to know how the colonies actually looked’. Crowley, ‘A Visual Empire: Seeing the British Atlantic World from a Global British Perspective’, in Elizabeth Mancke and Carole Shammas (eds), *The Creation of the British Atlantic*, (Baltimore, 2005), p. 283. Richard Dunn suggests that ‘Englishmen who inhabited Barbados, Jamaica, and the Leewards during the seventeenth century rarely bothered to write descriptions of what they saw or did’. Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, p. 23.

<sup>6</sup> Carl Bridenbaugh and Roberta Bridenbaugh, *No Peace beyond the Line. The English in the Caribbean, 1624-1690* (New York, 1972), p. 165; Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, pp. 149-50, 177-78.

<sup>7</sup> With over 4,000 inhabitants, Port Royal was the busiest port in Anglo-American colonies. The frontier of Jamaica and its agricultural production, however, lagged far behind other more settled English colonies. Port Royal and its expanding merchant community represented the only tangible asset in the island; the colony on the whole was in a precarious situation before, and especially after the earthquake.

the Houses, Churches, Sugar-Works, Mills, and Bridges through the whole Country,' to smite the 'wickedest city on earth.'<sup>8</sup> Modern historians, however, have shown that the immediate effects of the earthquake were confined to Port Royal and the surrounding area and that the physical damage resulted from geological and architectural factors rather than divine judgment.<sup>9</sup> The social repercussions of this natural disaster, however, reverberated throughout the colony well after the aftershocks subsided. In short, the earthquake further exacerbated many long-standing issues Anglo-Jamaicans struggled with as they sought to codify their own internal social, economic, and political structures at the close of the seventeenth century.<sup>10</sup>

During the first half-century of English occupation, Jamaica experienced considerable growing pains. Unparalleled death among Europeans, brought on by perhaps the single worst disease environment in the Caribbean, created a host of problems which colonial elites were forced to confront.<sup>11</sup> An unstable labor supply and

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<sup>8</sup> *A Genuine Account of Earthquakes, Especially that at Oxford in the year 1683; and another Terrible One at Port-Royal, in Jamaica, In the Year 1692* (London: 1701); *A True and Perfect Relation of that most Sad and Terrible Earthquake, at Port Royal in Jamaica* (London, 1692); *A full Account of the Late Dreadful Earthquake at Port Royal in Jamaica, written in two Letters from the Minister of that Place* (London, 1692). For a collection of several contemporary letters regarding the earthquake see: Henry J. Cadbury 'Quakers and the Earthquake at Port Royal, 1693', *Jamaican Historical Review*, 8 (1971), pp. 19-31.

<sup>9</sup> For the most exhaustive account of Port Royal see: Michael Pawson and David Buisseret, *Port Royal Jamaica* (Kingston, 2000); Buisseret, 'Port Royal, 1655-1725', *Jamaican Historical Review*, 6 (1966), pp. 21-28. For a more recent interpretation of geological and architectural factors of the earthquake see: Matthew Mulcahy, 'The Port Royal Earthquake and the World of Wonders in Seventeenth-Century Jamaica', *Early American Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 6:2 (2008), pp. 391-421. For the impact of natural disasters in throughout the British West Indies see: Mulcahy, *Hurricanes and Society in the British Greater Caribbean, 1624-1783* (Baltimore, 2006).

<sup>10</sup> For political factionalism see: Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, pp. 156-62.

<sup>11</sup> John R. McNeill, *Mosquito Empires. Ecology and War in the Greater Caribbean, 1620-1914* (Cambridge, 2010); Trevor Burnard, 'A Failed Settler Society: Marriage and Demographic Failure in Early Jamaica', *Journal of Social History*, 28:1 (1994), pp. 63-



an unsettled frontier opened avenues for circumstances that retarded both the growth of a proper settler society and Jamaica's integration into an expanding Atlantic economy. During this period, however, Jamaica began a considerable transformation, albeit slowly, inconsistently, and punctuated by conflict. Jamaica transformed from a frontier society dominated by ex-English military men turned small planters and privateers, who were governed by martial law, into a well-settled plantation society dominated by a diminishing number of powerful white planters and their enslaved Africans.<sup>12</sup> Through a number of political and economic struggles elite Anglo-Jamaicans created a proper colonial government and a proper plantation society but this chapter examines the struggle at its peak and what caused a considerable exodus of long-time Anglo-Jamaicans around the turn of the eighteenth century.

In 1696, during the height of the chaos engendered by the earthquake, Jonathan Dickinson, aged 33, decided to relocate his young family and his mercantile affairs to Philadelphia.<sup>13</sup> His father, Francis, remained behind to manage the development of their family holdings in St. Elizabeth Parish, Spanish Town, and what was left of Port Royal.<sup>14</sup> While Dickinson never explicitly stated why he decided to leave Jamaica in the 1690s, by examining the problems Anglo-Jamaicans faced during the period this chapter argues that

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82; Burnard, "'The Country Continues Sicklie': White Mortality in Jamaica, 1655-1780", *Social History of Medicine*, 12:1 (1999), pp.45-72. For a contemporary account of disease in Jamaica see:

Trapham, Thomas Trapham, *A Discourse of the State of Heath in the Island of Jamaica* (London, 1679).

<sup>12</sup> Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, pp. 149-187.

<sup>13</sup> Dickinson departed Port Royal, Jamaica on 23 August 1696.

<sup>14</sup> By the 1690s, the Dickinson owned nearly 10,000 acres in St. Elizabeth Parish, a counting house in Port Royal, and a secondary store in Spanish Town. Charles Andrews and Evangeline Walker Andrews (eds), *Jonathan Dickinson's Journal or God's Protecting Providence. Being the Narrative of a Journey from Port Royal Jamaica to Philadelphia between August 23, 1696 and April 1, 1697* (Hew Haven, 1945), p. 1-22.

a number of factors combined in ‘pushing’ him to leave Jamaica. By examining the reasons why Dickinson decided to leave Jamaica, this chapter illustrates that the future of Jamaica at the end of the seventeenth century was anything but certain. On the whole, Jamaica was a terribly unsafe place to raise a family. White mortality peaked during the 1690s and people left the island in droves.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, developing land and settling plantations along the southwestern frontier of Jamaica was dangerous and costly, while trans-Atlantic trade to and from Jamaica was typically inconsistent.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, these circumstances forced Dickinson to look beyond the bounds of the island and across the Atlantic Ocean to ensure his personal prosperity.

The 1690s was a distinctive period of decline in Jamaica, after which the island took a fundamental turning toward the prosperity of the late-eighteenth century. This chapter seeks to understand the complexities of ‘growing up Jamaican’ in the personal sense of Dickinson’s family but also in a much larger context of the colony ‘growing up’ in an emerging Atlantic system. While mid-eighteenth-century Jamaica was quite a different place than it was during the seventeenth century, Trevor Burnard suggests, ‘the success of the plantation complex in eighteenth-century Jamaica and the social structure that it engendered gives a degree of inevitability to its establishment and character in

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<sup>15</sup> McNeill, *Mosquito Empires*; Burnard, ‘A Failed Settler Society: Marriage and Demographic Failure in Early Jamaica’; Burnard, “‘The Country Continues Sicklie’”.

<sup>16</sup> During the seventeenth century, Barbados was clearly the premier Anglo-Caribbean colony. David Eltis suggests that ‘Jamaica, by contrast, was settled later and gradually became a major sugar producer after 1670, so gradually, in fact, that by 1700 it was the Leeward Islands, not Jamaica that first threatened Barbados’ status as the leading sugar producer of the English Americas.’ David Eltis, ‘New Estimates of Exports from Barbados and Jamaica, 1655-1701’, *William and Mary Quarterly*, 52:4 (1995), p. 631. For the growth of the Leewards see: Stanley L. Engerman, ‘Europe, the Lesser Antilles, and Economic Expansion, 1600-1800’, in Robert L. Paquette and Engerman (eds), *The Lesser Antilles in the Age of European Expansion* (Gainesville, 1996), p. 147-164; Natalie Zacek, *Settler Society in the English Leeward Islands, 1670-1776* (Cambridge, 2010).

Jamaica'.<sup>17</sup> This chapter seeks to examine the colony independent of that 'inevitability' to better understand how Jamaica 'grew up' before the eighteenth century and relatively isolated from an Atlantic system. Historians have only begun to uncover the social, economic, and political adjustments Jamaica experienced as it transformed from a colony on the verge of collapse into the 'Constant Mine whence Britain draws prodigious riches.'<sup>18</sup> Most historians typically study Jamaica during the eighteenth century and usually after 1750.<sup>19</sup> Therefore, the second half of the seventeenth century as a distinct period, during which time fundamental changes took place that altered the nature of the eighteenth century colony, rarely receives adequate academic attention.<sup>20</sup> This chaotic and understudied period provides a number of opportunities to examine several elemental changes in the nature of Jamaican society.

This chapter posits four reasons why Dickinson decided to leave Jamaica in 1696. First, the earthquake changed the nature of Jamaican commerce and forced the Dickinsons, particularly Jonathan, to look beyond simply trading English manufactures for tropical produce to ensure their continued prosperity. Jonathan, having grown up in Jamaica, undoubtedly realised that Jamaica suffered from a want of provisions, enslaved

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<sup>17</sup> Burnard, 'A Failed Settler Society', p. 64.

<sup>18</sup> Charles Leslie, *A new and exact account of Jamaica* (Edinburgh, 1740), p. 353 quoted in Burnard, *Mastery, Tyranny, and Desire: Thomas Thistlewood and His Slaves in the Anglo-Jamaican World* (Chapel Hill, 2004), p. 14.

<sup>19</sup> Notable exceptions include: Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*; Susan Dwyer Amussen, *Caribbean Exchanges: Slavery and the Transformation of English Society, 1640-1700* (Chapel Hill, 2007); Bridenbaugh and Bridenbaugh, *No Peace Beyond the Line*.

<sup>20</sup> There are some exceptions, most notably the work of Nuala Zahedieh. See, Zahedieh, *The Capital and the Colonies. London and the Atlantic Economy, 1660-1700* (Cambridge, 2010); Zahedieh, 'Trade, Plunder, and Economic Development in early English Jamaica, 1655-1689' (PhD dissertation, University of London, 1984); Zahadieh, 'The Merchants of Port Royal, Jamaica and the Spanish Contraband Trade, 1655-1692', *William and Mary Quarterly*, 43:4 (1986), pp. 570-93; Zahadieh, 'Trade, Plunder, and Economic Development in early English Jamaica, 1655-1689', *The Economic History Review*, 39 (1986), pp. 205-22.

Africans, and other goods that were not being readily supplied to the isolated colony. Consequently, Dickinson decided to pursue those essential goods in an effort to capitalise on an undersupplied market. Therefore, he sought new markets and new produce from the North American continent. Dickinson could have decided to relocate to Virginia, South Carolina, or New England, but he decided on Philadelphia. His Quaker sensibilities may have drawn him to the only *seemingly* prosperous English colony at the turn of the eighteenth century. The news and advice he received from recently relocated Anglo-Jamaicans about Pennsylvania may have also pulled him toward the mid-Atlantic colonies. The increasing discrimination he, and his fellow Friends, endured in Jamaica may be a second reason Dickinson decided to leave Jamaica.

Third, Jamaica became increasingly unsafe during the 1680s and 1690s and was under a constant threat of foreign invasion, particularly from the French. That threat was realised in the 1694 when the French, spurred on by the chaos engendered by the earthquake, invaded the island and laid to waste large sections of the northern frontier and carried off hundreds of enslaved Africans.<sup>21</sup> Invasions or threats of invasion meant that frontier settlement stagnated. That stagnation ultimately hindered the development of a strong planter community and hampered their ability to extract the full potential of the island. Fourth, the lack of a reliable labor force stifled the settling of plantations, and ultimately profits, for nascent middling planters who would be increasingly marginalised by large sugar estates during the first decades of the eighteenth century. They quickly found themselves unable to take the next step to becoming large planters with sizable slave forces. While white laboring-class and ex-military men sought to further their

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<sup>21</sup> David Buisseret, 'The French Invasion of Jamaica, 1694', *Jamaica Journal*, 16:3 (1983), pp. 31-33.

interests off the island through privateering, slave traders did not sufficiently supply the island with enough enslaved Africans to counteract the drain on white labor engendered by death and emigration. The supply of enslaved Africans to Jamaica was wholly inconsistent during the seventeenth century, but those Africans who did come to the island proved to be consistently rebellious. This rebelliousness further added to the uncertainty of frontier life for Anglo-Jamaica planters.

Therefore, in the mid-1690s when all of these forces combined to bring about the near collapse of English power on the island, Dickinson, like many other Jamaicans, decided to leave for colonies with more economic potential and less social discord. This collective emigration and the ever-present harbinger of death, tropical disease that lingered over the island brought the white population to its nadir in the late 1690s. In short, Dickinson decided to leave Jamaica to seek better mercantile opportunities in a colony that was wholly accepting of, and for that matter dominated by, Quakers. Dickinson, however, did not turn his back on Jamaica. Despite the many problems inherent in Jamaica, the island's uncertainty provided many opportunities for ambitious men to make considerable profits. The chaos and uncertainty of Jamaica in the 1690s was not solely a cause for concern. It was also an opportunity to link the prosperous colony of Pennsylvania, and the mother country, England, to the fledgling colony adrift in the Caribbean.

### **Problems with Building a Settler Society**

From the first days of the English conquest of Jamaica, Anglo-Jamaican settlers, enslaved Africans, and various other Caribbean wanderers faced the hardships of building the

infrastructure of Jamaica from the ground up.<sup>22</sup> In 1660, the last retreating Spaniards left only a collection of dilapidated buildings in a single town, a few over-grown cacao walks, wandering herds of feral pigs and cows, and a substantial number of former slaves (turned rebels) living in the mountains.<sup>23</sup> Governor Edward D'Oyley painted a dismal picture of Jamaica in 1660:

all the frigates are gone, and neither money in the treasury, victuals in the storehouses, nor anything belonging to the State is left...the island has a sense of being deserted by their own country, which fills the minds of the people with sad and serious thoughts.<sup>24</sup>

By 1663, the year of Jonathan Dickinson's birth, Jamaica remained little more than an isolated military outpost. The island contained fewer than 4,000 people including a small, but significant, number of enslaved Africans. Vast expanses of wilderness occupied much of the island and very few plantations existed beyond the environs of Port Royal. Nearly a decade after the conquest, Anglo-Jamaican planters cultivated fewer than

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<sup>22</sup> Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, pp. 149-187

<sup>23</sup> Francisco Morales Pardón, *Spanish Jamaica* (Kingston, 2003); H. P. Jacobs, 'The Spanish Period of Jamaican History: An Assessment of the Present State of Knowledge' *Jamaican Historical Review*, 3:1 (1957), pp. 79-93; Frank Cundell, *Jamaica under the Spaniards abstracted from the archives of Seville* (Kingston, 1919). For the English conquest of Jamaica see: S.A.G. Taylor, *The Western Design: An Account of Cromwell's Expedition to the Caribbean* (London, 1969); Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, pp. 20-23, 151-56; A.P. Newton, *The European Nations in the West Indies, 1493-1688* (New York, 1933), pp. 204-223; Cyril Hamshire, *The British in the Caribbean* (Cambridge, 1972), pp. 68-91; C.H. Haring, *The Buccaneers in the West Indies in the Seventeenth Century* (Hamden, 1966), pp. 85-112; S.A.G. Taylor, 'Military Operations in Jamaica, 1655-1660', *Jamaican Historical Review*, 2:1 (1949), pp. 7-25; James Robertson, 'Re-writing the English conquest of Jamaica in the late seventeenth century', *The English Historical Review*, 117 (2002), pp. 813-840. J.L. Pietersz, H.P. Jacobs, and S.A.G. Taylor (eds), 'Two Spanish Documents of 1656', *Jamaican Historical Review*, 2:2 (1949), pp. 11-35. For the impact of disease during the English conquest of Jamaica see: McNeill, *Mosquito Empires*, pp. 97-105.

<sup>24</sup> Public Record Office, CO 1/141, Lieutenant General Edward D'Oyley to Commissioners of the Admiralty, 26 July 1660, p. 51.

3,000 acres of a total of two and half million available acres.<sup>25</sup> While the colonial government had established seven parishes, their boundaries were little more than lines on map. Nascent plantations, hunter's huts, and military outposts dotted the dynamic and varied landscape but much of the interior remained unsettled, inhospitable, or occupied by incorrigible maroon bands who further discouraged settlement. By the eve of Dickinson's departure from the island, the uncertainties of the 1690s had nearly erased all evidence of what little economic growth Jamaica experienced during the first three decades of English colonisation.<sup>26</sup>

While Anglo-Jamaicans faced a host of hardships at the end of the seventeenth century, white mortality was by far the single largest obstacle to the development of Jamaica and probably was the factor above all others that prompted Dickinson to leave the island. During the 1690s, an unstable white population discouraged further immigration, fostered considerable emigration, and created labor shortage problems. Nevertheless, despite high death rates, thousands of people migrated to Jamaica during the first few years of settlement. Most did not survive the unfavorable conditions on the isolated island.<sup>27</sup> In 1660, D'Oyley feared that 'sickness would reduce their already small numbers.'<sup>28</sup> Four years later, Thomas Modyford suggested that the 'place is generally healthful' but 'near the mouths of great rivers and in the low valley grounds, it is very feverish to new comers' during the summer months and 'anguish' during the

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<sup>25</sup> PRO, *Journals of the Assembly of Jamaica, 1663-1709*, p. 20

<sup>26</sup> David Eltis, 'New Estimates of Exports from Barbados and Jamaica', pp. 631-648

<sup>27</sup> In 1670, Sir Thomas Modyford suggested several other reasons why people were failing to pursue permanent settlement in Jamaica including rumors that the island was to be sold to the Spanish and that the King intended to impose new taxes on the native commodities before exportation.

<sup>28</sup> PRO, CO 1/141, Lieutenant General Edward D'Oyley to Commissioners of the Admiralty, 1 June 1660, p. 7

fall.<sup>29</sup> Another letter from 1664 lamented an ‘uncommon mortality’ during the summer months.<sup>30</sup> Modyford also concluded that certain settlements were worse than others, particularly ‘at Port Morant by which many perished’ from disease.<sup>31</sup> The death of newcomers was certainly worse during particular periods and at particular places, but people died in droves in Jamaica throughout each year.<sup>32</sup> Trevor Burnard and Richard Dunn suggest that before 1661 perhaps as many as ‘12,000 English people came to Jamaica.’ By 1662, however, only 3,600 people remained on the island.<sup>33</sup> Therefore, this initial demographic failure, as Burnard suggests, was not a result of a lack of immigration but rather a result of the migrants’ ‘inability to withstand, perhaps, the worst disease environment in the Atlantic colonies.’<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> PRO, CO 1/18, A view of the condition of Jamaica, attested by Governor Sir Thomas Modyford, 1664 October 1, pp. 258-61.

<sup>30</sup> PRO, CO 1/18, Extract of a letter from Jamaica, 1664, p. 262.

<sup>31</sup> PRO, CO 1/18, A view of the condition of Jamaica, attested by Governor Sir Thomas Modyford, 1664 October 1, pp. 258-61.

<sup>32</sup> Conversely, Dunn suggests that ‘Port Royal was a healthier community than Bridgetown [Barbados] in 1680, probably because it was free from mosquitoes and hence malaria’. Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, p. 181.

<sup>33</sup> Burnard, ‘European Migration to Jamaica’, *William and Mary Quarterly*, 53:4 (1996), p. 772. McNeill suggests that shortly after the conquest the English ‘imported thousands of beggars, vagrants, and prisoners from the British Isles.’ McNeill, *Mosquito Empires*, p. 100.

<sup>34</sup> Mortality varied annually due to severe outbreaks of epidemic disease, especially yellow fever. Jamaican society was especially propitious for the spread of yellow fever. Ironically, the very things that made Jamaica prosperous and which encouraged ambitious Englishmen to cross the Atlantic to the tropics were the primary contributors to the dreadful demographic conditions that rendered white settlement in Jamaica uncertain. Burnard succinctly relates the irony: ‘the ships that carried West African slaves to Jamaica in increasingly large number after 1670 also brought with them the mosquitoes that had the yellow fever virus. Planter cut down forests to grow sugar, decreasing the number of birds that were natural predator of mosquitoes. Consequently, the mosquito population surged. Moreover, sugar refining required clay pots. Many of these pots were discarded and left out in the rain, collecting rain water that prove ideal for the breeding patterns of mosquitoes’. Burnard, ‘A Failed Settler Society’, pp. 63-82; Burnard, ‘The Countrie Continues Sicklie’, pp.45-72.



Dickinson's father, Royal Navy Captain Francis Dickinson, however, was one of the lucky few who survived the unforgiving 'seasoning period' after his arrival with the English conquest of Jamaica in 1655.<sup>35</sup> By 1660, the original invading force of over 7,000 men, as contemporaries suggest, was transformed into a 'relic of the army, [a mere] 2,200.'<sup>36</sup> Unlike a large portion of his military counterparts, Francis eschewed a life as privateer and began a merchant business in Port Royal but he represented the minority.<sup>37</sup> By the early 1660s, very few of Francis' colleagues showed an interest in settling the frontier, most were dead, some had deserted, and a few, mainly officers, had managed to get sent back to England. The conquering army was in such a wretched state because most of the officers and soldiers plundered and mutinied instead of working and planting.<sup>38</sup> Short of supplies, they slaughtered the wild cattle indiscriminately and refused to plant provisions.<sup>39</sup> Their wastefulness led to scarcity of food that further exacerbated the problems of disease and death.<sup>40</sup> As a result of the harsh disease environment, lack of supplies, and the difficulty of financing, clearing, and planting plantations, a majority of the former military men and early settlers from other Caribbean

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<sup>35</sup> Mc Neill suggests that 'within three weeks some 3,000 men were sick, and in six months the original force of 9,000 men had dwindled to 3,720, of whom more than 2,000 were "sick and helpless"'. McNeill, *Mosquito Empire*, p.100.

<sup>36</sup> PRO, CO 1/14, Long Report concerning Jamaica, November 1660. McNeill suggests that by 1660, 'only some 2,200 troops remained of the roughly 10,000 committed to the Jamaica campaign...[and] probably 6,000 to 8,000 died of disease'. McNeill, *Mosquito Empire*, p. 101.

<sup>37</sup> Andrews and Andrews, *Jonathan Dickinson's Journal*, p. 5.

<sup>38</sup> Verene Shepherd suggests that 'the mutinous attitude displayed by the early English soldiers and which was aimed at forcing Cromwell to abandon Jamaica as a possible English colony did not have the desired effect.' She further suggests that 'by 1657, conditions in the island had reached crisis proportions.' Verene Shepherd, 'Livestock and Sugar: Aspects of Jamaica's Agricultural Development from the Late Seventeenth to Early Nineteenth Century', *The Historical Journal*, 34:3 (1991), p. 630.

<sup>39</sup> Shepherd, 'Livestock and Sugar', pp. 629-31; S.A.G. Taylor, 'Military Operations in Jamaica', p. 7.

<sup>40</sup> Haring, *The Buccaneers in the West Indies*, p. 91.

Islands turned toward plundering or sought their fortunes off the island after pillaging what little resources left by the retreating Spaniards.<sup>41</sup> Therefore, those surviving Anglo-Jamaicans and their immigrant counterparts quickly gained a very poor reputation. Contemporaries characterised the West Indians who joined the invading army as ‘raw souldiers, Vagabonds, Robbers, and runagate servants’.<sup>42</sup> Other early commentators suggested that ‘these islands must be [populated by] the very scum of scums, and meer dregs of corruption.’<sup>43</sup>

Consequently, encouraging people to settle and plant the island proved to be a very difficult task for the governors and promoters of Jamaica especially when privateering was such an attractive alternative.<sup>44</sup> The year of Dickinson’s birth, 1663, Deputy Governor Lyttelton, who was aching to get out of Jamaica, wrote to Secretary Sir Henry Bennet ‘wishing he could say the planters had also increased’, but ‘not more than 200 have come.’ He further lamented that ‘the year ha[d] been very sickly, and carried away great number.’<sup>45</sup> The detrimental effects of disease prompted the local government, as early as 1661, to implement provisions regulating people who wished to leave the island. The Governor and Council of Jamaica ordered that ‘no person leave the island

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<sup>41</sup> Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, p. 153.

<sup>42</sup> PRO, CO 1/17, Charles. Lyttelton, Deputy Governor, to Sec. Sir Henry Bennet, 15 October 1663, pp. 205-06.

<sup>43</sup> *A brief and perfect Journal of the late Proceedings and Success of the English Army in the West Indies continued until June the 24th, by I. S. an Eye-Witness* (London, 1655), p. 11.

<sup>44</sup> For a general survey of Jamaica’s governors see: Frank Cundall, *The Governors of Jamaica in the Seventeenth Century* (London, 1936); Cundall, *The Governors of Jamaica in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1937).

<sup>45</sup> PRO, CO 1/17, Sir Chas. Lyttelton, Deputy Governor to Sec. Sir Henry Bennet, pp. 205-06.

without his name be up in the Secretary's office for 21 days, all underwriting cleared.'<sup>46</sup>

That same session the Governor 'prohibited any merchant...to leave the island or take away any person without a ticket from the governor' under the exorbitant penalty of 500 pounds of sugar.<sup>47</sup>

Despite these terrible conditions, Francis, his new wife, Margaret Crooke, and their infant son, Jonathan Dickinson, built a life in Jamaica during the late-seventeenth century. Initially, Francis cut his cloth as a small-time merchant. Despite being granted large tracts of land for his services during the conquest, Francis initially lacked the capital necessary to start a sugar plantation. He, like many others, turned to trade. This trade, both licit and illicit, as Nuala Zahedieh aptly argues, financed the growth of Jamaican plantations but that growth was largely inconsistent until the eighteenth century.<sup>48</sup> Successfully adding to his holdings, Francis invested in plantation land along the southwestern frontier and began to expand both his trading ventures and his considerable plantations. Francis represented an archetype; governors and colonial officials hoped others might emulate his accomplishments. He was English-born; he contributed to the economic growth of the colony; he condemned privateering; he used the profits from his mercantile business to develop plantations along the frontier; he married an English woman and started a family, all extraordinary feats considering the circumstances.

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<sup>46</sup> PRO, CO 1/140, Orders of the Governor and Council of Jamaica 2-3 July 1661, pp. 5-98.

<sup>47</sup> PRO, CO 1/140, Orders of the Governor of Jamaica, pp. 17-20.

<sup>48</sup> Zahedieh, 'Trade, Plunder, and Economic Development in Early Jamaica, 1655-89', p. 222.

Francis and Margaret's marriage and family was extraordinary for two reasons.<sup>49</sup> First, considering the highly imbalanced sex ratio, the simple fact that they were able to find suitable partners in Jamaica is remarkable. In 1662, less than 650 white women resided in Jamaica alongside nearly 2,600 white men; at four to one, women were extremely scarce when Francis married Margaret.<sup>50</sup> In some parishes, especially along the frontier and in parishes that were simple military outposts, the sex ratio was even more highly imbalanced. Along the southwestern frontier near the Black River and Bower-Savanna, men outnumbered women eight to one. In Ligeanea, the heart of plantation country, men comprised sixty-seven per cent of the population. In Port Royal the ratio of men to women, at two to one, was more balanced but was still unfavorable for finding a potential mate. In 1673 the figures across the colony mirrored those in Port Royal during the 1660s with around 2,000 white women and 4,000 white men living in the colony.<sup>51</sup>

Second, the fact that their marriage resulted in a child who lived to adulthood was nearly astonishing. Furthermore, Francis and Margaret had three other children, and three of the four led full adult lives well into their fifties, nothing short of a demographic miracle. Genetics must have played a part because Francis also lived a long-life in contemporary terms; he died in Jamaica at age seventy-two, but earned immunity was also crucial. The Dickinson children were exposed to tropical diseases such as yellow

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<sup>49</sup> Francis married Margaret Crooke, daughter of Stephen Crooke, in early 1663 several months before she gave birth to Jonathan.

<sup>50</sup> PRO, *Journals of the Assembly of Jamaica*, p. 20.

<sup>51</sup> PRO, *Journals of the Assembly of Jamaica*, p. 40.

fever at early ages and the immunities they developed as a result put them at a massive comparative advantage compared to adult immigrants.<sup>52</sup>

Consequently, Jonathan Dickinson and his siblings, Mary, Caleb, and Jabez, were part of a very fragile first generation of Jamaican-born creoles. During the Dickinsons' first thirty years on the island, tens of thousands of people died, including many children. In 1662, only an estimated 400 children lived in Jamaica. Logically, fewer women translated to fewer children. Only twelve children resided along the southwestern frontier while in the 'Angles quarters' where the sex ratio was five to one, there were only fourteen children. In Port Royal, children comprised thirteen per cent of total white population.<sup>53</sup> Ultimately, children were scarce nearly everywhere because they were much more susceptible to the disease environment than their adult counterparts. The paucity of children in early Jamaica doomed most families to be, at best, one- or two-generational.<sup>54</sup>

It is impossible, however, to know exactly how many children were born in Jamaica, and how many immigrated to the island. In 1670, the year Francis and Margaret's third child, Caleb, was born an estimated 714 white families lived in Jamaica. Total population estimates for that same year range widely between 4,000 and 10,000 meaning that the average family was comprised of between five and fourteen people, depending which figure is used. This seems to be an overestimate in either the population figures or the number of families and the discrepancy may be a result of a number of indentured servants living in Jamaica tabulated in the population figures but

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<sup>52</sup> See McNeill, *Mosquito Empires*.

<sup>53</sup> PRO, *Journals of the Assembly of Jamaica*, pp. 20, 40.

<sup>54</sup> A child will survive yellow fever while adults often do not, but children suffer high mortality from neo-natal tetanus (lockjaw), intestinal diseases, and of course malaria.

not in the household figures. Nevertheless, these figures are clearly not representative of the actual institution of the family in Jamaica during the 1660s and 1670s, which begs for scholarly attention.<sup>55</sup> Even so, given that an average marriage lasted less than ten years and less than forty per cent of marriages left surviving children, the size of Francis and Margaret's family and the duration of their marriage was highly unusual.<sup>56</sup>

The repercussions of the fragility of marriage and childhood in Jamaica made the chances for the growth of a native-born settler population almost nonexistent because, as Burnard suggests, the 'crucial factor determining family size was length of marriage'.<sup>57</sup> Moreover, these conditions worsened as the seventeenth century drew to a close and as plantation society took shape because enslaved Africans came to dominate the population and small family planters were replaced by absentee planters and immigrant managers.<sup>58</sup> The 1690s, with large numbers of deaths and out-migration, represent the demographic nadir of Jamaica during the seventeenth century. The effects were so widespread and destructive that the white Jamaican population remained stagnant for nearly thirty years after the 1690s. The importation of tens of thousands of enslaved Africans changed the nature of Jamaican society and as a result of the increasing number of Africans and decreasing number of whites the constitution of the Jamaica population became a major concern for the governors and other leading elements of Jamaica. Despite the island

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<sup>55</sup> See Burnard, 'A Failed Settler Society'.

<sup>56</sup> Burnard, 'A Failed Settler Society', p. 69.

<sup>57</sup> Burnard, 'A Failed Settler Society', p. 69. In fact, the Dickinson family grew exponentially. At the time of Francis's death, in 1704, he had four grandchildren. Fifteen years later, Jonathan and Caleb had a total of ten children combined, all of whom lived in either the mid-Atlantic colonies or England. Figure one presents four generations of Dickinsons. Within two generations, the profits generated by Francis, Jonathan, and Caleb's trans-Atlantic business affairs facilitated the Dickinson's settlement into gentry-life in England.

<sup>58</sup> Burnard, *Mastery, Tyranny, and Desire. Thomas Thistlewood and His Slaves in the Anglo-Jamaican World* (Chapel Hill, 2004); Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*.

politicians' intense concern about the low level of white immigration, little systematic data survive about population or about annual arrivals or departures.<sup>59</sup> Four censuses were taken during the period from 1680 to 1730—a number of these records are fragmentary, incomplete, or only present gross population totals. Thus, establishing accurate figures of white population levels and migrant flows is fraught with difficulties. Table One presents the best tabulation of estimated population figures for the total population.

Table One: Population Estimates for Jamaica, 1655-1730

Year	Total Number of Whites	Total Number of Blacks	Total Population
1655	c. 7,000	-----	-----
1658	4,500	c. 1500	-----
1660	c. 4,000	-----	-----
1661	2,956	514	3,470
1662	3,653	552	4,205
1664	2,900-5,000	-----	-----
1670	4,200 (+c. 1,500)	2,500	Ca. 8,200; (15,108)
1673	7,768	9,504	17,278
1676	c. 7,500	c. 15,000	c. 22,500
1693	7,365	40,635	c. 48,000
1698	c. 7,365	c. 40,000	47,365
1730	8,230	75,535	83,765
		35% remained in the colony	

The data for this data was excised for both primary and secondary sources including: Haring, *The Buccaneers in the West Indies*, p. 92; PRO, CO 1/14, Long Report Concerning Jamaica, November 1660, pp. 125-40; Noel Sainsbury (ed.), *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial, America and the West Indies, 1661-1668* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1880); PRO, *Journals of the House of Assembly of Jamaica, 1663-1826*, app. 20; PRO, CO 1/18, Lt. Col. Thomas Lynch to Sec Henry Bennet (Lord

<sup>59</sup> The Jamaican government made occasional attempts to foster white settlement in the island by passing deficiency laws. Those attempts were futile and were often resisted by the planters. Dickinson wrote to Isaac Norris complaining about these laws that fined owners of enslaved Africans and specified livestock in proportion to the number of white men employed. Dickinson devised a plan around these regulations that will be addressed below.

Arlington), pp. 154-55; PRO, CO 1/18, An account of the state of Jamaica by Sir Charles Lyttleton, pp. 264-65; PRO, CO 1/25, Account of present state of Jamaica given in to Sec. Lord Arlington by Chas. Modyford, 22 January 1670, p. 5; PRO, *Journals of the House of Assembly of Jamaica*, pp. 28, 40; PRO, CO 1/36, Peter Beckford to Secretary Williamson, 26 January 1676, pp. 17-18; PRO, CO 137/4, Beeston to Council of Trade and Plantations, 13 October 1698, pp. 225-26; J.W. Fortesque (ed.), *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial, America and the West Indies, 1697-1698* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1904), pp. 474-76; Burnard, 'European Migration to Jamaica', p. 772.

Since natural increase was essentially out of the question, Jamaican promoters and politicians constantly struggled to encourage people to come to the island. This demographic failure fundamentally altered how Anglo-Jamaicans developed plantations, established commerce, and promoted security for the island. In 1660, with the population steadily declining, the Earl of Marlborough offered several suggestions to make Jamaica a more attractive proposition. First, he suggested that there be some small vessel readily available in the Caribbean to those who might want to relocate. He also wanted to encourage the Royal African Company to make Jamaica 'a staple for the sale of blacks.' Beyond this he supposed that granting religious toleration, allowing island commodities to be duty free, and supplying the islands with servants, goods, arms, stores, and women might also generate interest in settling the island.<sup>60</sup>

English officials also attempted to entice people by offering favorable conditions to settle in the island. The King sent a petition to New England with incentives to immigrate to Jamaica. He offered 'land [twenty acres to every male over twelve years old]...without payment of rent for seven years.' He also offered a three-year tax holiday on their goods, their growth, and their manufactured goods.<sup>61</sup> That same week the

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<sup>60</sup> PRO, CO 1/14, Proposals concerning Jamaica from Earl of Marlborough, 1660 November, pp. 123-24.

<sup>61</sup> PRO, State Papers 25/76, The above instructions to the Governor and inhabitants of New England, 26 September 1655, pp. 304-06.



Council of State began organising a venture to provide provisions, clothing, medicaments, tools, and other necessities for settlers already in Jamaica.<sup>62</sup> By the winter of 1661 the King extended his land policy to ‘30 acres of land to every person male or female, above 12 years of age, who shall reside’ in the island. In exchange the King’s officials required the grantees to ‘serve in arms upon any insurrection, mutiny, or foreign invasion.’<sup>63</sup> New immigrants, albeit in small numbers, joined the dwindling number of soldiers that comprised the remainder of the nearly 7,000 military men that landed as part of the expedition against the Spanish. They, like their military counterparts, died in droves. For example, in December 1656 the Council of State requested that D’Oyley invite the sixty English Protestants from Eleuthera, who fled Bermuda amidst religious persecution, to Jamaica, and promised to clothe and provide victuals and other accommodation for them.<sup>64</sup> That same year, Luke Stokes, the elderly governor of Nevis, transferred to Jamaica with 1,600 people. Unfortunately they choose to settle in the Morant Bay area, which was particularly unhealthy; within a year Luke Stokes and two-thirds of his companions were dead.<sup>65</sup> Thomas Modyford came to the island from Barbados with nearly 1,600 settlers in 1664. Jamaica received other injections of settlers from around the Caribbean, particularly Suriname during the 1670s.<sup>66</sup> Their numbers, however, were simply not enough to counteract the drain on life in Jamaica.

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<sup>62</sup> PRO, State Papers 25/76, Order of the Council of State, 27 September 1655, pp. 310-11.

<sup>63</sup> PRO, CO 1/15, The King’s proclamation for encouraging of planters in Jamaica, 14 December 1661, pp. 183-84.

<sup>64</sup> PRO, SP 25/77, The Council of State to the Commander-in-Chief of the English fleet in America, 23 December 1656, p. 949.

<sup>65</sup> Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, p.123

<sup>66</sup> PRO, CO 1/35, pp.101-02, 178-86.

Anglo-Caribbean migrants, however, represented the minority.<sup>67</sup> During the 1670s and 1680s fewer than 2,000 white colonists and 3,500 enslaved Africans migrated to Jamaica from other English Caribbean islands. A large majority of those migrants came during the 1670s with fewer than 200 whites and 500 Africans arriving during the second half of the 1680s.<sup>68</sup> Burnard has illustrated that most new emigrants to Jamaica came from England. Burnard's study of the period from 1660-1770, with a sample of over 3,000 migrants, illustrates that eighty-six per cent of people arriving in Jamaica came from England.<sup>69</sup> Colonists from other British colonies in the West Indies and North America comprised less than two per cent of the total combined.<sup>70</sup>

In the end, the extent of mortality among whites was so great that a transition to a self-perpetuating white native-born population never occurred. Jamaica was unable to be transformed into a settler society and remained dominated by sojourners well into the first decades of the eighteenth century.<sup>71</sup> Moreover, the arrival of unseasoned troops and

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<sup>67</sup> Sir Thomas Modyford suggested that the Privy Council encourage the governors of the Windward Island, especially Barbados, to encourage superfluous planters and servants to come to Jamaica by forbidding the establishment of new settlements and suppressing false scandals. He also suggested that they incline the nobility, gentry, and merchants to settle plantations while encouraging the Royal Company to send 'plenty of negroes.' Sir Thomas Lynch had high hopes for Jamaica: 'Young colonies, like tender plants, should be cherished and dealt easily with, it being better to put soil to their roots than to pluck too early fruit. If Jamaica have easy government, be defended from enemies, and supplied with negroes and servants, and have no privateering, in six years it may produce as much sugars as Barbadoes.'

<sup>68</sup> Zahedieh, 'Trade, Plunder, and Development', p. 214

<sup>69</sup> Attempts at populating the colony, from England, with white immigrants persisted formally until well into the eighteenth century, but a combination of factors ensured the failure of such attempts. For most Europeans the climate was not the most hospitable and the frequency of natural disasters promoted Jamaica's poor reputation. Disease, many of which were endemic to the island, took a heavy toll on newcomers. Strife and constitutional conflicts with the mother country resulted in great insecurity, which was intensified by the frequent slave revolts.

<sup>70</sup> Burnard, 'European Migration to Jamaica, 1655-1780', pp. 769-96.

<sup>71</sup> Burnard, 'A Failed Settler Society', pp. 63-65.

settlers from England made matters worse, because they became chronically sick and helped spread diseases already present in Jamaica into the civilian population. In essence this demographic problem led to a shift in the composition of Jamaica's planter class by wiping out the small planter class in Jamaica. The ranchers, cotton planters, and provision farmers who died at the turn of the eighteenth century were not replaced and their lands were turned over to neighbouring planters who expanded their holdings and essentially forced small planters out of the market.<sup>72</sup>

By the 1690s, the Dickinsons were not 'small planters' anymore but the decline of small planting opened up opportunities to import provisions from other colonies. Therefore, the repercussions of white mortality offered Francis Dickinson an opportunity to expand his holding in Jamaica to nearly 10,000 acres of plantation land. By the 1690s, Jonathan held a large interest in the island. He was also a newlywed with an infant child. Ever-present death was probably quite unsettling to the new father but it was not the only problem Anglo-Jamaicans faced at the end of the seventeenth century and several other factors combined to push Dickinson from his well-settled home in Jamaica.

### **Problems with Pirates and Privateers**

Anglo-Jamaican officials constantly struggled with sustaining a population on the island during the seventeenth century. Without a settled population the majority of the island remained a frontier, and in turn, unprofitable and vulnerable to attack. To combat the issue of insecurity, Jamaican officials looked toward outsiders for protection.<sup>73</sup> The first

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<sup>72</sup> Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, p. 164.

<sup>73</sup> Without a naval squadron Jamaica's position was extremely vulnerable 'circled with the enemy's countries.' Barbados and the Leewards were too far away to render assistance if Jamaica were attacked. Although it took only a week from east to west, a voyage eastwards from Jamaica to Barbados tacking against trade winds usually took seven to eight weeks. Hamshire, *The British in the Caribbean*, p. 74.

governors of Jamaica, until Thomas Lynch in the 1670s, greatly favored and assisted Caribbean-based buccaneers especially after English naval support deserted the island.<sup>74</sup> These outsiders proved to be a double-edged sword for Jamaican society. On one hand, pirates/privateers provided a much-needed defense of the infant colony, as well as a steady supply of plunder and bullion for the island. Some historians argue that the exploits of buccaneers made Anglo-Jamaicans relatively self-sufficient and provided the capital necessary to develop large sugar estates.<sup>75</sup> On the other hand, the attractions of piracy also enticed many would-be settlers to a life at sea that promised quick returns rather than one on the plantation.<sup>76</sup> Piracy, privateering, and, later, foreign invasion proved to be more immediate threats when former protectors of the colony

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<sup>74</sup> Former officers of Penn and Venables carried out some of the first raiding missions on the Tierra Firme coast, notably at Santa Marta and Riohacha. Certain official participants displayed some ambivalence about these raids, and a few, such as the short-lived governor Robert Sedgwick, even denounced them as dishonorable. Jamaica under Edward D'Oyley was unabashedly pro-buccaneer and D'Oyley participated in or sponsored a number of raiding missions until his removal in August of 1661. Lord Windsor, D'Oyley's replacement called in all older privateering commissions only to promptly replace them with his own commissions, ensuring his cut of the pirate proceeds.

<sup>75</sup> Marcus Rediker suggests that 'buccaneering, usually associated with the dazzling exploits of Henry Morgan, was a source of substantial wealth during the early years of English settlement in the "Carbey Island"'. From 1655 to 1671, Morgan and his raiders to sack eighteen cities, four towns, and thirty-five villages in New Spain. Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea. Merchant Seamen, Pirates, and the Anglo-American Maritime World, 1700-1750* (Cambridge, 1987), p.58.

<sup>76</sup> Dunn suggests that 'between 1655 and 1689 there were two Jamaicas: the agricultural colony and the buccaneer's rendezvous'. Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, p. 177. Bridenbaugh and Bridenbaugh suggests that 'buccaneering siphoned off the most adventurous, pugnacious, and greedy of the landless males of the crowded English islands. The prospects of booty and plunder from cities of the Spanish Main, let alone the promise of three meals a day with plenty of meat, sufficed to attract them to the seventeenth-century Foreign Legion based on Tortuga. Bridenbaugh and Bridenbaugh, *No Peace Beyond the Line*, p. 176.

indiscriminately began attacking Jamaican shipping as well as isolated plantations on the northern coast and southwestern frontier.<sup>77</sup>

From the first days of the English conquest, Jamaica represented an attractive base for sailors who lived ‘beyond the line.’<sup>78</sup> Located in the heart of the Spanish Caribbean, Jamaica was ideally situated to attack Spanish shipping lanes and settlements. Attacking ships and settlements, however, posed two problems. First, the home government’s policy regarding raiding settlements and shipping lanes directly related to whether or not England was at war with other European countries. Therefore, the distinction between pirate and privateer blurred according to crown policy. Across the ocean many pirates/privateers, spurred on by ambitious colonial governors, acted without paying much credence to directions coming from the mother country. Moreover, in retribution for English sponsored attacks, foreign raids and attacks certainly brought about unwanted counterstrikes on Jamaican plantations and shipping. On the other hand, if England lost control of the seas, Jamaica, the most isolated frontier in the Anglo-Caribbean, would be highly vulnerable to foreign attack. The trade winds that brought news, goods, and the fleet from Barbados or Antigua in less than a fortnight were the same winds that could bring an invasion overnight from the French or Spanish communities on Hispaniola.<sup>79</sup> Jamaican shipping lanes ran the gauntlet of all the

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<sup>77</sup> Bridenbaugh and Bridenbaugh suggest that ‘attacks on or by the Spanish, Dutch, French, or aborigines (Carib Indians) occurred so frequently that there were deemed to be normal happenings’. Bridenbaugh and Bridenbaugh, *No Peace Beyond the Line*, p. 165.

<sup>78</sup> Piracy had been a part of the English involvement in the West Indies since the sixteenth century, when fierce Elizabethan sea dogs, epitomized by Sir Francis Drake, marauded the Spanish Main. From this and other armed confrontations came the phrase ‘no peace beyond the line.’ Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, pp. 57-8.

<sup>79</sup> Ian Steele, *The English Atlantic. An Exploration of Communication and Community, 1675-1740* (Oxford, 1986), p. 29.

Caribbean freebooters in peace and all the same enemies battle-dressed as privateers in war. Therefore, Jamaica needed to be more self-sufficient than other English Islands.<sup>80</sup>

Considering these issues, Governor D'Oyley lured away a number of English and French pirates from the northern shores of Hispaniola and encouraged them to make Port Royal their home port. He counted on gaining naval protection and some revenue from their exploits, while the pirates acquired a superlative harbor, which was increasingly well defended, a good market for their loot, and better facilities for provisioning and repairing their ships.<sup>81</sup> Therefore, the island's strategic position and seemingly lenient policy regarding privateers led to Port Royal quickly becoming a base for freebooting activities against the Spanish. Privateering brought in coin, bullion, cocoa, logwood, hides, tallow, indigo, cochineal; it attracted an exchange of trade with New England and filled Port Royal with merchants. The poorer planters received a market for their provisions; the richer planters were able to buy slaves, in theory. Taken collectively over the long durée, pirates spent their booty quickly in port on drinking, gambling, and women and contributed greatly to the exponential growth of Jamaica in the eighteenth century.<sup>82</sup>

This arrangement, however, posed immediate problems. First, the dispersed nature of the privateers and their varied objectives rendered them unable or unwilling to defend the island from a full-scale foreign assault. Second, they were often disinclined to distinguish between an enemy vessel and an English one, when the chance of a prize offered itself. Most concerning, perhaps, privateering became so attractive that merchant

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid., pp. 29-30.

<sup>81</sup> Pawson and Buisseret, *Port Royal, Jamaica*, p. 25; Newton, *The European Nations in the West Indies*, pp. 256-277.

<sup>82</sup> Hamshere, *The British in the Caribbean*, p. 76.

ships and plantations suffered from a labor shortage. Finally, with the restoration of Charles II, English officials adopted a policy of trying to secure a share of Spanish trade by agreement, rather than force. If this policy was to succeed, attacks of the buccaneers must cease. Shortly thereafter, royal officials appointed Thomas Modyford, who, like many Jamaican planters, as well as his predecessor, Lynch, opposed buccaneering because of its destruction of peaceful trade.<sup>83</sup> In 1664, Modyford began sending reassuring letters to Spanish officials at Santo Domingo and Cartagena and attempted to pursue a peaceful course to open-up free commerce between Jamaica and the settlements of the Spanish Caribbean because Spanish contrabandists showed themselves quite willing to buy English-held slaves and other goods at Port Royal.<sup>84</sup>

Nevertheless, after zealously punishing several unsuspecting buccaneers at Port Royal, Modyford quickly understood the error of his ways. The buccaneers simply deserted the port and made for friendlier waters near French-held Tortuga and Hispaniola. This shift led to such a precipitous decline in commerce at Port Royal that Modyford changed his mind and began to tolerate and then openly support piracy. In 1664, Sir Charles Lyttleton estimated that fourteen or fifteen privateers totaling 1,500 to

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<sup>83</sup> Newton, *The European Nations in the West Indies*, p. 230.

<sup>84</sup> Kris Lane, *Pillaging the Empire. Piracy in the Americas, 1500-1750* (New York, 1998), p. 111. Modyford envisioned developing Jamaica into an emporium, where slaves might be collected from Africa and matured while awaiting sale to the Spanish colonies. English goods might be stored to await favorable opportunities for sale, and Jamaican merchants, who would make Port Royal into a busy center of commercial enterprise, might deal with the produce of the Spanish Main. To carry out this statesman-like scheme, he needed to persuade the Spanish governors that he desired friendly relations. An opposing party in Jamaica, comprised of members who held strong friends among the government at home, favored an anti-Spanish policy that might create more immediate returns. They, counter to Modyford and other planters, desired to foster the buccaneers and encourage them to bring all their spoils to Jamaica. The Cabinet at home and in the West Indies debated the two plans with alternate favor and necessarily diverse effects. Newton, *European Nations in the West Indies*, pp. 231-31.

2,000 seamen of all nations used Port Royal as a base.<sup>85</sup> By 1670, twenty such vessels with about 2,000 men called at Port Royal and until 1671, the chief interest of Jamaica was buccaneering against the Spanish settlements and commerce.<sup>86</sup>

By the end of 1672, the mood regarding privateers changed but the practice remained. Reappointed Governor, Thomas Lynch wrote ‘privateering was the sickness of Jamaica, for that and planting a country are absolutely inconsistent.’ Five years later, Lynch continued to express his concerns about privateering because it ‘discourage[d] settlers, enable[d] people to leave the island, [and] hinder[d] correspondence and trade with thy neighboring Spaniards.’<sup>87</sup> Instead of settling down to agriculture, many Anglo-Jamaicans traded illegally in slaves and manufactures with the Spanish Main, engaged in the logwood trade at Yucatan and were preyed upon by Spanish coast guards, or turned pirates.<sup>88</sup> Lynch estimated the between 1668 and 1671 Jamaica alone lost about 2,600 men on buccaneering raids against Tobago, Curacao, Porto Bello, Granada, and Panama; in the last expedition four-fifths of the men from Jamaica died, and planting was greatly retarded by the labor shortage thus created.<sup>89</sup>

The problem was not easy to fix. In 1680, Lord Carlisle expressed his concerns to the Lords of Trade and Plantations: ‘the depredations and injuries of the privateers are committed by a sort of men without the reach of the Government.’ Carlisle complained that he could not ‘proceed to punishment of any particular person’ because the Spanish

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<sup>85</sup> CO 1/18, An Account of the state of Jamaica by Sir Charles Lyttleton, October 1664, pp. 264-65.

<sup>86</sup> Frank Wesley Pitman, *The Development of the British West Indies, 1700-1763* (New Haven, 1917), p. 14.

<sup>87</sup> PRO, CO 1/40, Reflections of the state of Spaniards and the island of Jamaica, 20 June 1677, pp. 245-46.

<sup>88</sup> Pitman, *The Development of the British West Indies*, p. 15; Haring, *The Buccaneers of the West Indies in the Seventeenth Century*

<sup>89</sup> Bridenbaugh and Bridenbaugh, *No Peace Beyond the Line*, pp. 176-77.



had made no explicit complaint.<sup>90</sup> The problem persisted into 1681 when the ex-pirate turned politician, Sir Henry Morgan, complained that ‘we are much infested by pirates...[who] plunder and take vessels belonging to this island.’<sup>91</sup> Two years later, Lynch suggested that despite the people being satisfied and ‘under the perfectest peace...our losses and troubles through pirates are intolerable.’ He went on to illuminate how Jamaica was more affected than other colonies:

We have lost divers vessels on the coast of Cuba and in the South Cays, some in the Bay of Honduras, others on the coast of the Main...reckoning our losses...come to forty or fifty thousand pounds. This falls heavily...on a young Colony with a young trade...We are fed by provisions from New England, New York, and Ireland, and have fishermen at the South Cays; all these routes were interrupted and dangerous.<sup>92</sup>

Piracy and privateering posed continual threats to Jamaica. In 1686, Captain Simon Musgrave and several others proposed a possible solution to the threat of piracy. They suggested that the government erect a ‘cotton manufacture’ in the island that would result in the ‘further settling, improving, and strengthening of Jamaica’ because those who might otherwise seek a livelihood in privateering would take employment of the ‘lower sort of people.’<sup>93</sup> In 1687 after Captain Spragge returned to Port Royal with Captain Banister, a pirate, and three of his consorts hanging from his yardarm, Lieutenant

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<sup>90</sup> PRO, CO 1/46, Lord Carlisle to the Lords of Trade and Plantations, 21 September 1680, pp. 37-38; PRO, CO 138/3, pp. 431-34.

<sup>91</sup> PRO, CO 1/47, Sir Henry Morgan to Lords of Trade and Plantations, 14 July 1681, pp. 61-62; PRO, CO 138/4, pp. 42-44.

<sup>92</sup> PRO, CO 1/51, Sir Thomas Lynch to William Blathwayt, 22 February 1683, pp. 100-05; PRO, CO 138/4, pp. 141-52.

<sup>93</sup> PRO, CO 138/5, Molesworth to William Blathwayt, 17 January 1686, pp. 139-40.

Governor Molesworth called it ‘a spectacle of great satisfaction to all good people and of terror to the favourers of pirates.’<sup>94</sup> Two months later, Lt. Governor Molesworth reported that ‘privateering which never received such checks as I have given it within the last few months, nor were we ever so free as we lately from such vermin.’<sup>95</sup> A year later in 1688, the Duke of Albemarle reported that fifty-six pirates who came into Port Royal were arrested and their goods were seized; this served to deter others.<sup>96</sup> Yet in 1689, after the death of the Duke of Albemarle, Sir Francis Watson reported that Sir Thomas Lynch ‘stirred up irreconcilable enmity with the French.’ He suggested that his ‘inconsiderate management has done more towards the repression of pirates, because they refused to come in after ‘his severity and threats.’ Still ‘over a thousand men’ were engaged in piracy; Watson feared that that privateers ‘may combine in despair and fall upon the island.’<sup>97</sup>

Because the coasts of Jamaica were under continual attacks from privateers, French, Spanish, or mere renegade English sailing under ‘letters of marque’ issued by Monsieur de Casse, governor of the French settlements in western Hispaniola, life on remote plantations was insecure and frightening. Every so often privateers landed along the defenseless leeward side of the island burning houses, taking prisoners and stealing enslaved Africans.<sup>98</sup> While privateers created a host of problems, the possibility of a foreign invasion posed a much greater threat to the security of the island. The damage of

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<sup>94</sup> PRO, CO 138/5, Molesworth to William Blathwayt 9 February 1687, pp. 323-35.

<sup>95</sup> PRO, CO 138/6, Molesworth to William Blathwayt, 17 April 1687, pp. 31-36.

<sup>96</sup> PRO, CO 1/64, Governor Duke of Albemarle to Lords of Trade and Plantations, 11 May 1688, p. 299; PRO, CO 138/6, pp. 118-22.

<sup>97</sup> PRO, CO 138/6, Sir Francis Watson to Lords of Trade and Plantations, 22 April 1689, pp. 316-19; PRO, CO 137/2, pp. 15-16.

<sup>98</sup> PRO, CO 1/25, Extract of letter from Port Royal, 28 June 1670, pp. 88-89.

buccaneers and pirates was fleeting when compared to the destruction brought on by officially sanctioned fleets of French, Dutch, and Spanish warships that cruised the Caribbean during the frequent wars between 1660 and 1713. The Anglo-French wars of 1666-67, 1689-97, and 1702-1713 proved very destructive in the Caribbean—far more so than in North America. The aim in these wars was to damage enemy property rather than to annex it. French and English expeditions repeatedly raided each other's islands, carried off slaves, burned plantations, and seized shipping.<sup>99</sup>

Beginning in the late 1670s, the Anglo-Jamaican authorities expressed concern about the possibility of a French invasion. In October 1678, Lord Carlisle suggested that if war did break out with France that the 'island will stand in need of assistance' because of a lack of fighting men; yet another problem posed by the demographic failure in Jamaica.<sup>100</sup> The next summer, some of those worries were realised when a sizable French contingent landed to 'wood and water at Blewfield's Bay' in the western part of the island. Even though they posed no immediate threat, 'the Point was so alarmed that the inhabitants removed their goods and families for fear of French descent.' Many planters frequently sent their families to Port Royal and Spanish Town for safety, further disrupting the settlement and profitability of the frontier.<sup>101</sup> After this encounter, 'the whole of the inhabitants, soldiers and slaves, were set to work to increase the fortifications.'<sup>102</sup> After which time Lord Carlisle, in August 1679 suggested that 'the

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<sup>99</sup> Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, p. 22-23.

<sup>100</sup> PRO, CO 138/3, Governor Lord Carlisle to Sec. Coventry, 24 October 1678, pp. 277-84.

<sup>101</sup> Hamshire, *The British in the Caribbean*, p. 114.

<sup>102</sup> PRO, CO 138/3, Governor Lord Carlisle to Secretary Coventry, 10 July 1679, pp. 320-23.

apprehension of the island from the French fleet is very great.’<sup>103</sup> The next month he ordered that ‘a hundred more negroes [were] to be added to the slaves at the Point to carry on fortifications.’<sup>104</sup>

Thereafter, beginning earnestly in the late 1680s, a real French threat emerged. Sir Henry Morgan wrote to Lord Sunderland about a French privateer came to the island ‘to take wood and water,’ during which time ‘she had entertained many runaways and debtors off this island;’ he continued, ‘their numbers are increased by the necessitous and unfortunate.’ Ironically, he suggested, ‘nothing can be more fatal to the prosperity of this Colony than the temptingly alluring boldness and success of the privateers.’<sup>105</sup> In 1685 after a French ship careened ‘on the leeward most part of ye North side of this island, rumors began that ‘the French fleet was also about the island.’<sup>106</sup>

During the summer of 1689 merchants voiced their concerns and asked for three frigates to secure their waters:

the French are at present very near and powerful enemies of Jamaica, as they can sail there in twenty-four hours from Petit Guavos or Tortugas... The island itself is long and the plantations begin on the sea are far from one another are liable to be spoiled and burned by French pirates.<sup>107</sup>

This threat was realised a few months later when Laurens de Graff, a Dutch pirate sailing for the French, with a ship and two hundred men, touched at Montego Bay and threatened

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<sup>103</sup> PRO, CO 1/43, Lord Carlisle to Secretary Coventry, 30 August 1679, p. 199.

<sup>104</sup> PRO, CO 138/3, Governor Lord Carlisle to Secretary Henry Coventry, 15 September 1679, pp. 331-38.

<sup>105</sup> PRO, CO 1/45, Sir Henry Morgan to Lord Sunderland, 5 July 1680, pp. 180-81; PRO, CO 138/3, pp. 416-18.

<sup>106</sup> PRO, CO 138/5, Molesworth to William Blathwayt, 16 November 1685, pp. 115-18.

<sup>107</sup> PRO, CO 137/2, Memorial of merchants trading in Jamaica, 26 July 1689, p. 43.

to return to “plunder the whole North side of the island.” The Jamaican planters sent their wives and children to Port Royal and went about preparing for a possible invasion.<sup>108</sup> In the end, the total loss of this small-scale raid of Port Maria totaled just under £2,500.<sup>109</sup>

In 1692, after the earthquake, a band of Frenchmen ravaged part of the north coast. Several months later, William Beeston suggested to the Earl of Nottingham that the French ‘grow too numerous, and in time will overpower us if not prevented before too late.’ He continued, ‘the French pickeroons land on our coasts and steal negroes and other goods almost every week.’ The French grew increasing bolder because, as Beeston suggests, ‘they had good intelligence from some of our villainous deserters.’<sup>110</sup>

In March 1694, Fulke Rose explained the defending Jamaica would be more difficult than before because the island was lacking seamen. Many left the island, he explained for three reasons: their share of prizes was withheld during Lord Inchiquin’s time, the 1692 earthquake and the subsequent sickness, and impressments. He begged that no one be impressed into service. Most of the men, he supposed, fled to Providence, Curacao, or the French Islands. He also estimated the damage caused by the French privateers, ‘which have ruined the remoter settlements of Jamaica’ at £30,000.<sup>111</sup>

In April 1694, tensions continued to mount again; the H.M.S. *Falcon*, cruising off the eastern end of Jamaica, drove off six small privateers apparently intent upon a raid,

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<sup>108</sup> PRO, CO 138/6, Sir Francis Watson to Lords of Trade and Plantations, 27 October 1689, pp. 327-29; PRO, CO 140/4, Council Minutes of Jamaica to Lords of Trade and Plantations, 7 May 1690, pp. 303-06.

<sup>109</sup> PRO, CO 140/5, Minutes of Council of Jamaica, 24 June 1691, pp. 86-87.

<sup>110</sup> PRO, CO 137/3, Sir William Beeston to the Earl of Nottingham, 19 October 1693, pp. 71-72.

<sup>111</sup> PRO, CO 138/7, Representations of Fulke Rose, 5 March 1694, pp. 180-82; PRO, CO 137/3, pp. 100-01.

and some time during May, Governor Beeston received a warning from Curacao that ‘the French were making great preparations against Jamaica.’ Beeston complained to the Lords of Trade and Plantations: ‘if we continue to decrease and the French to increase, what is to become of the country?’<sup>112</sup> The threat of a large invasion was imminent and once the French landed the Council of Jamaica ordered that all forts windward to be abandoned and that all the people come to Liguanea and Kingston with their ‘cattle, negroes, etc.’<sup>113</sup> They also ordered that any slave killing a Frenchman shall receive his freedom.<sup>114</sup> Beeston succinctly reviewed the events to the Lords of Trade and Plantations:

I have already reported our danger from our own weakness and the growing power of the French. What I foresaw has now come upon us. The French making daily inroads on our out-parts, I sent the Falcon to cruise to eastward and keep them off, which she did, for six French sail which were designing to plunder St. David’s and St. Thomas refused to fight her, and turned back to Petit Guavos. Three strong French men-of-war had just arrived there which, together with another already in that port, were sent out in search of the Falcon which they easily found and took...on Sunday morning, the 17th inst., their fleet of fourteen sail came in sight and came to an anchor in Cow Bay, seven leagues to windward of Port Royal. There they landed, and have ever since been ravaging, plundering and burning all before them in St. David's or St. Thomas: but I had ordered the

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<sup>112</sup> PRO, CO 137/3, 5 April 1694, pp. 102-02.

<sup>113</sup> For a brief description of the invasion see: Buisseret, ‘The French Invasion of Jamaica, 1694’.

<sup>114</sup> PRO, CO 140/5, Minutes of Council of Jamaica, 6 June 1694, pp. 280-81; PRO, CO 140/5, Minutes of Council of Jamaica, 31 May 1694, pp. 279-80.

people with the best of their goods and many of their negroes to these parts, about three days before.<sup>115</sup>

He continued:

Some of our people who have lately escaped from them report that they still design against Port Royal and our united strength, when their ships and men are reunited. We will do our best to defend it, and I think that if they had any hopes of carrying the Island they would not be so barbarous, for they spare nothing alive, except mankind, and those they punish and torture. They burn and destroy all that will burn, fill the wells with dead cattle and do all the mischief that they can.<sup>116</sup>

By the beginning of August Jamaicans had 'beaten off[f] the French', but only after they had 'done this people and country a spoil that cannot soon be estimated'. In the end, the French expedition of 3,000 destroyed fifty sugar works, besides many other plantations, 'burnt all wherever they came...killed with barbarous inhumanity every living thing they met with', and captured nearly 1,600 enslaved Africans.<sup>117</sup> The parishes of St. Thomas and St. David were utterly destroyed and St. George's, St. Mary's and Vere are much damaged though not overrun.<sup>118</sup> Jamaican commerce, on the other hand, was badly disrupted. Beeston suggested 'by a moderate computation the cost of the war will amount to £10,000; and five of the parishes, instead of helping, must receive relief to resettle the people.'<sup>119</sup> After the invasion expenses increased, fortifications deteriorated,

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<sup>115</sup> PRO, CO 138/7, 23 June 1694, pp. 192-96; CO 137/3, pp. 105-06.

<sup>116</sup> PRO, CO 137/4, 7 July 1694, pp. 88-89.

<sup>117</sup> Another report suggested that: 'fifty sugar works, five rum works, twenty-one cotton works, fifty-four indigo works, eleven provision plantations, &c. destroyed, and 1,962 slaves carried off by the enemy.' PRO, CO 137/4, pp. 289-321.

<sup>118</sup> PRO, CO 138/7, 7 August 1694, pp. 401-05; Buisseret, 'The French Invasion of Jamaica- 1694', p. 31; Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, p. 163

<sup>119</sup> PRO, CO 138/8, 26 August 1694, pp. 14-19.

and communications from England were so few and far between that ‘our enemies [the French] ha[d] better intelligence from England than we ha[d].’

The worst effect of war, however, was demographic. The white population, which had never been large, declined by nearly thirty per cent during the years from 1689 to 1713. Many of those who left or died were small planters who were never replaced. So like Barbados a generation earlier, large planters began to consolidate their holdings.<sup>120</sup> During this period the number of white servants also dropped off significantly. The labor shortage, however, was supplemented by the importation of enslaved Africans but that only served to further compound the issue of white mortality with the introduction of many African diseases to the island. During the same period, the island’s slave population nearly doubled from 30,000 to 55,000.<sup>121</sup> Securing a steady supply of labor, however, proved to be a third fundamental problem in expanding the plantation economy of Jamaica.

### **Problems with Slavery**

During the late-seventeenth century, Anglo-Jamaican planters never received a sufficient supply of enslaved Africans; in turn, an insufficient labor supply further compounded issues arising from white mortality.<sup>122</sup> The rate at which slave traders delivered enslaved Africans simply could not sufficiently counteract the dearth of white labor.<sup>123</sup> Therefore, the development of plantations and the extension of sugar culture in Jamaica proved to be an exceedingly slow process. This slow development may be attributed to a lack of people, the agrarian system, the social ideas, and the policy of restricted production

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<sup>120</sup> Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, p. 164.

<sup>121</sup> Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, p. 165.

<sup>122</sup> Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, p. 21.

<sup>123</sup> Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, p. 155; Burnard, ‘European Migration to Jamaica’, p.



followed by its great planters but fundamentally a result of an inconsistent labor supply. It was nearly a generation after the conquest of Jamaica, in 1655, before that island developed a strong planting community.

English settlers faced the daunting tasks of amassing the resources to get sugar planting underway—to clear the land, build roads, houses, forts, harbors, and support the labor force until the first crops appeared. Dickinson, his father, Francis, and his brother, Caleb, faced all these problems in St. Elizabeth Parish. Jamaica had only seven sugar works in 1655 producing negligible quantities. By 1671, this island contained forty-two cocoa walks, nineteen indigo works, three cotton plantations, a few small plantations, and only fifty-seven sugar plantations. In 1670 Jamaican sugar plantation produced 500 tons of sugar compared to Barbados 7,500 and the Leeward's 2,000. By 1700, Jamaica sugar production increased considerably to 4,500 tons but that was less than half of Barbados (8,200) and considerably less than the Leewards (6,800). It was not until 1760 that Jamaica sugar production outstripped its other West Indian competitors when Jamaica produced several thousands tons more than Barbados and the Leewards combined (31,600 to 29,500). From that point forward Jamaican led the way.<sup>124</sup> The century-long struggle for Jamaica to emerge as England's leading sugar producer began in the 1660s with an insufficient supply of labor.

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<sup>124</sup> A map dated 1685 shows that Jamaica had 246 sugar plantations. By 1689 sugar production was over 12,000 hogsheads per year and was approaching the Barbadian level of 15,000 to 20,000 hogsheads. The 1690s and the 1700s, however were decades of stagnation. Philip Lea, *A Generall Map of the Contenant and Island which are Adjacent to Jamaica* [with] *The English Empire* [with] *A Mapp of the Island of Jamaica* (London, 1685).

In 1664, Lt. Col., Thomas Lynch remarked in a letter to Sir Henry Bennet that Jamaica had ‘many hopeful plantations if supplied with negroes.’<sup>125</sup> In 1665, Lynch reiterated his concerns about the supply of African slaves, as well as the general decline of the population: ‘many of the people that came with the governor are dead and not one but himself has yet made any plantation...there has been little improvement this eight or ten months.’ He characterised the ‘want of negroes’ as ‘the grand obstruction’ to the advancement of the colony.<sup>126</sup> To encourage more slave imports, John Style suggested that ‘the island would take all the negroes of the Royal Company, if they would give 18 months credit.’ The credit was necessary because, as Style suggested, ‘so great is the scarcity of money, that unless there be free trade or war with the Spaniards, the colony will never flourish or hardly be kept.’<sup>127</sup> Well into the 1670s, Lynch continued to complain about the lack of a labor force. In 1674, he wrote to Sir Joseph Williamson that ‘without constant supplies of slaves there can be no custom, navigation, trade, or subsistence.’<sup>128</sup>

When asked about the condition of the island upon his arrival, Sir Thomas Modyford replied to the question: ‘what obstructions do you find to trade and navigation?’ He replied simply that “had all nations permission to bring them [enslaved Africans], as to Barbados they had till about 1652, this place would suddenly swell up to

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<sup>125</sup> PRO, CO 1/18, Thomas Lynch to Sec. Sir Henry Bennet (Lord Arlington), pp. 154.-55

<sup>126</sup> PRO, CO 1/19, Thomas Lynch to Sec. Henry Bennet, 2 February 1655, pp. 31-32.

<sup>127</sup> PRO, CO 1/19, John Style to Sec. Lord Arlington 24 July 1665, pp. 187-90.

<sup>128</sup> PRO, CO 1/31, Sir Thomas Lynch to Sec. Joseph Williamson, 20 November 1674, pp. 226-27.

a great felicity and wealth than ever that did.”<sup>129</sup> In 1676, The Royal African Company began delivering slaves to Jamaica, but Peter Beckford complained that they were at ‘too high rates’ and the planters suffered in their ‘continual want of them.’<sup>130</sup> He further suggested that, ‘the people of this island [are] much dissatisfied with The Royal Company, for they are not furnished with negroes as other plantations.’<sup>131</sup>

In November 1680 the planters of Jamaica logged a formal complaint to the Crown that The Royal African Company, which had a theoretical monopoly in the island, supplied them with an insufficient supply of enslaved Africans and at too high prices. Lynch suggested, in 1682, that ‘many men that had money went away without any slaves’. As a result he claimed that ‘it [was impossible] to hinder the importation [beyond The Royal African Company] of negroes, for the island is large and slaves as needful to a planter as money to a courtier, and as much coveted.’<sup>132</sup>

In January 1683 The Royal African Company answered to the king about the complaints raised by the Jamaican planters of an ‘insufficient supply of negroes.’ They argued that a fixed price was ‘to [their] great prejudice’; therefore, they could not continue that trade for three reasons. At first they suggested that ‘light Spanish money’ inflated the price of Jamaican sugars, yet the price had ‘fallen all over Europe’ resulting in a loss in their returns. Second, they suggested that because of a rise in the number of ‘interloping ships’ along the African coast the cost of enslaved Africans was one-third

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<sup>129</sup> PRO, CO 138/1, The Governor of Jamaica’s answers to the inquires of His Majesty’s Commissioners, August 1671, pp. 96-104.

<sup>130</sup> PRO, CO 1/36, Peter Beckford to Secretary Williamson, 26 January 1676, pp. 17-18.

<sup>131</sup> PRO, CO 1/37, Peter Beckford to Sec. Sir Joseph Williamson, 24 June 1676, pp. 25-26.

<sup>132</sup> PRO, CO 1/49, Sir Thomas Lynch to Lords of Trade and Plantations, pp. 123-25; PRO, CO 138/4, pp. 78-91.

more than previous years. Finally, they suggested that because of the first two reasons ‘commanders and owners of ships employed are so discouraged that very many of them absolutely refuse to go to Jamaica.’<sup>133</sup>

The planters of Jamaica replied again by arguing that their company did business with ‘men of mean or no estate,’ when they might have found better customers. They also suggested that the company has only granted credit that Jamaicans can pay ‘for she [Jamaica] is known to pay them better than any other plantations.’ Moreover, they argued that their money was current and any issue was because ‘the company has simply mismanaged its business.’ Finally, they complained that while ‘there are some who are strangers to Jamaica or dislike the Company’s terms, there are always plenty who are willing enough to go there.’<sup>134</sup> Lynch bitterly remarked: ‘it is the failure to provide negroes that is the ruin of all.’<sup>135</sup> In 1684 Lynch continued complaining that ‘we have no negroes nor hope of negroes this long time.’ Lynch, however, remained dedicated to the Royal African Company refusing to buy slaves from a Spanish ship.<sup>136</sup> Later that year, Lynch expressed his greatest concern after ‘whisperings that [he] was bribed and partial to The Royal African Company’ and, taken along with ‘the riots at the Point’ engendered by his conflict with the Morgans, caused ‘more trouble than [he] ever had in [his] life.’<sup>137</sup> This political conflict only further compounded the issues regarding the supply of

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<sup>133</sup> PRO, CO 1/51, Petition of Royal African Company to the King, 12 January 1683, pp. 10-11.

<sup>134</sup> PRO, CO 1/51, Answers of the Jamaican to the petition of the Royal African Company, 28 January 1683, pp. 49-50.

<sup>135</sup> PRO, CO 1/51, Sir Thomas Lynch to the Lord President of the Council, 6 May 1683, pp. 319-23.

<sup>136</sup> PRO, CO 1/54, Sir Thomas Lynch to Lords of Trade and Plantations, 28 February 1684, pp. 93-98; PRO, CO 138/4, pp. 236-55.

<sup>137</sup> PRO, CO 1/54, Sir Thomas Lynch to Secretary Sir Leoline Jenkins, March 1684, pp. 10-14.

enslaved Africans. Only in June 1684 was Lynch able to report that ‘the Royal Company now begins to supply us well.’<sup>138</sup>

Five years later, however, in 1689 the Council of Assembly sent an address to King James II asserting that despite ‘some thousands of negroes’ being imported by the Company to the island, ‘few of these have fallen to the planters’ share.’ The main point of contention was that the ‘choicest negroes’ typically went to foreigners because they were selected by the factors to ‘suit the Spanish.’ They further complained that even if the planters had a chance to buy the slaves with ‘ready money’ they were refused as they lacked pieces-of-eight. Jamaican purchasers were left ‘only the refuse at £22 a head,’ and were forced into ‘buying refuse negroes of Jews and beggarly sub-brokers, who buy sick negroes at £8 or £10 a head; so that scarce a third of the negroes bought by the planters from the Company are still alive.’<sup>139</sup>

These problems grew worse after the earthquake and the French invasion. The late-1690s were particularly meager times for everyone in Jamaica. Slave traders, discouraged by uncertain markets and unstable prices, left Jamaica undersupplied. During the period from 1693-1698, slave traders imported 7,495 enslaved Africans to Jamaica. While an average of 125 enslaved Africans per month arrived in Jamaica, it was insufficient to promote the growth planters desired: Barbados, during the same period, received around 15,000 enslaved Africans, twice the total received by Jamaica. A much more mature plantation colony, Portuguese Brazil, received over 30,000 slaves in the same time span, averaging just over 500 slave imports per month, during the same

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<sup>138</sup> PRO, CO 1/54, Sir Thomas Lynch to the Lord President of the Council, 20 June 1684, pp. 361-64; PRO, CO 138/4, pp. 264-74.

<sup>139</sup> PRO, CO 137/2, Address of the Council of Assembly of Jamaica to King James II, 26 July 1689, pp. 37-38.

period. Overall the entire Caribbean received just over 50,000 enslaved Africans during this five-year period; Jamaica received around fifteen per cent of that total. Of nearly 87,000 enslaved Africans who arrived in New World during this period, less than nine per cent landed in Jamaica. Jamaica suffered from a dearth of slave labor throughout the seventeenth century. Between 1655 and 1699, Jamaica received just over 59,000 slaves compared to 94,000 in Barbados and a total of around 330,000 throughout the Caribbean. Jamaica received around seventeen per cent of all slaves shipped to the Caribbean and around thirteen per cent of all slaves shipped to the Americas during the second half of the seventeenth century.<sup>140</sup>

Table Two presents the total estimated number of enslaved Africans arriving in Jamaica during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries and highlights several key trends regarding slave arrivals in Jamaica. First, relatively few enslaved Africans, compared with other plantation colonies in the Caribbean, arrived in Jamaica despite the number of arrivals doubling between 1660 and 1670 and then again in the 1680s. Second, the 1690s witnessed a sharp decline in slave arrivals because many slave traders, beyond the already reluctant Royal African company, deliberately avoided Jamaica in the wake of the earthquake in 1692 and the French invasion in 1694. Third, the first decade of the eighteenth century marked an enormous upsurge in the rate of importation and a change in the nature of Jamaican plantation society.

Table Two: Immigration Estimates to Jamaica, 1655-1729

Years	Total Number of Whites	Total Number of Africans	Total Migrants
1655-1661	c. 12,000	445	c. 12,445
1662-1669	-----	4,889	-----

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<sup>140</sup> All figures regarding slave arrivals were extrapolated from *The Trans-Atlantic Slave Database*, available online at <http://www.slavevoyages.org> (21 November 2011).

1671-1679	5,396	11,816	17,212
1680-1689	-----	27, 239	-----
1690-1699	-----	17,332	-----
1700-1709	-----	49,106	-----
1710-1719	-----	44,210	-----
1720-1729	-----	60,889	-----
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1655-1729		213, 216	

All figures regarding slave arrivals were extrapolated from *The Trans-Atlantic Slave Database*, available online at <http://www.slavevoyages.org> (21 November 2011).

Who bought the enslaved Africans in Jamaica is also important question. Burnard argues that the type of slaves, the pattern in which they were purchased, and the people who bought them changed over time. In a study of the Royal African Company during the period from 1674 to 1708, Burnard analyses the extent to which slave purchasing was a universal activity among whites and the extent to which it was monopolised by wealthy officeholders.<sup>141</sup> Burnard notes that the Royal African Company sold sixty-seven per cent of all slaves arriving in Jamaica before 1690, but in the 1690s and 1700s the Company sold just around fifteen per cent of all slaves arriving in Jamaica.<sup>142</sup> Just as the importance of the Royal African Company declined, so too did the number of purchasers, from well over 200 in the 1670s and 1680s to less than seventy-five in the 1690s. Burnard argues that small time planters were eventually forced out of the market by the growth of larger, wealthier planters.<sup>143</sup> A lack of capital and the unsettled nature of the economy in Jamaica undoubtedly contributed to the demise of the small planter as well.

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<sup>141</sup> Burnard tabulated 20,992 slaves that can be assigned to 1,405 purchasers. Burnard, 'Who bought slaves in Early America? Purchasers of Slaves from the Royal African Company in Jamaica, 1674-1708', *Slavery and Abolition*, 17:2 (1996), pp.68-92.

<sup>142</sup> Burnard, 'Who bought slaves in Early America', p. 70.

<sup>143</sup> Burnard, 'Who bought slaves in Early America', p. 72.

<sup>144</sup> One important facet that Burnard highlights is the urban dimension to slave buying which created an internal and external trade of slaves on and off the island. As we shall see, Dickinson actively attempted to open a slave trade between Jamaica and Philadelphia, going so far as to bring ten enslaved individuals when he departed the island, far too many to serve as domestics in Philadelphia. His brother-in-law, Ezekiel Gomersall, was the single largest purchaser of slaves from St. Andrew Parish and this connection proved to be an important strand in Dickinson's weaving of his Atlantic web.<sup>145</sup>

In the end, no matter which party had a more justifiable complaint, or who was purchasing the slaves, slaves were not getting to Jamaica fast enough or cheaply enough for Jamaica to expand rapidly. The number of enslaved Africans arriving in Jamaica did not sufficiently meet the demand of Anglo-Jamaican planters for two reasons. Firstly, a substantial number of slaves did not remain in the island because traders often sold their slaves off the island to the Spanish at better rates. For example, on 14 June 1661, Governor D' Oyley received a Dutch ship at Port Royal laden with 180 enslaved Africans. He called the Council and urged them to trade with the Dutchman. Technically trading with the Dutch was illegal according the Navigation Acts but he urged the Council to accept the cargo because of the labor shortage. The Council refused. An enraged D'Oyley argued that the Council refused because they could not afford the asking price. D'Oyley, acting contrary to the Council's instructions, purchased the entire cargo within two or three hours. D'Oyley made 'rescue and retrivall', sold forty enslaved

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<sup>144</sup> The seventeenth century was different from eighteenth century when Jamaica was 'a favored destination for British slave traders. Burnard and Kenneth Morgan, 'The Dynamics of the Slave Market and Slave Purchasing Patterns in Jamaica, 1655-1788', *William and Mary Quarterly*, 58:1 (2001), pp. 205-228.

<sup>145</sup> Burnard, 'Who bought slaves in Early America', p. 82-83.



Africans to Major John Coape, a Quaker, and the rest, 'at great price', to a Spanish ship.<sup>146</sup>

Second, many slaves, like their white European counterparts, did not survive their first years in the colony. In 1698, out of nearly 60,000 enslaved Africans imported since 1655, only a reported 40,000 resided in Jamaica. The death of over nearly a third of the African population undoubtedly retarded the development of a stable labor force. The brutal labour regime and high death rates common in the Caribbean further complicated matters. Another possible drain on the labor pool may have been a result of the Council of Jamaica ordering 'that if any negroes shall raise a mutiny, any two justices of the peace may order their masters to sell or send them off the island.'<sup>147</sup>

Those enslaved Africans who made it to the island, and survived the 'seasoning period,' posed another real threat to the expansion of Jamaican plantation society and provided another legitimate factor that pushed Dickinson to leave the island in 1696. Few slave societies present a more impressive record of slave revolts than Jamaica. The first eighty-five years of the English occupation of the island (1655-1740) were marked by one long series of revolts, which reached a dramatic climax in the mid-eighteenth century.<sup>148</sup> During the first dozen years of English occupation, the colonists constantly

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<sup>146</sup> PRO, CO 1/15, Narrative of the buying and forfeiture of a shipload of negroes, 4 June 1661, pp. 123-25.

<sup>147</sup> PRO, CO 140/1, Minutes of the Council of Jamaica, 23 October 1663, pp. 85-88, 90.

<sup>148</sup> Orlando Patterson, 'Slavery and Slave Revolts,' in Richard Price (ed), *Maroon Communities. Rebel Slave Communities in the Americas* (Baltimore, 1996), p. 246. For a general overview of the origins of the Jamaican Maroons see: Michael Craton, *Testing the Chains. Resistance to Slavery in the British West Indies* (Ithaca, 1982).

fought the fugitive Spanish Maroons, and while plantation slavery was taking hold, they contended with ten sizable slave revolts between 1655 and 1696.<sup>149</sup>

In 1656, Major-general Sedgewick rightly suggested that the Spanish maroons would prove to be a ‘thorn in the sides of the English’ and ‘a great discouragement to the settling of the country.’<sup>150</sup> Michael Craton suggests that during the first decade of English Jamaica ‘there seem to have been at least four main “polinks”’.<sup>151</sup> Through force or accommodation Jamaican officials attempted to deal with the threat posed by maroons and fugitive slaves but ongoing war with the Spaniards and the Maroons meant that Jamaica remained militarized as settlement proceeded.<sup>152</sup> In 1663, the Lieutenant Governor, Sir Charles Lyttleton and his council, issued a proclamation, offering a full pardon, thirty acres of land, freedom from all manner of slavery, to each of them who should surrender and bring ‘their children to the English tongue.’<sup>153</sup> The Spanish Maroons refused the offer and continued to harass Anglo-Jamaicans who made several

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<sup>149</sup> Los Varnejales was situated in the mid-interior of Jamaica. Juan de Serras’ band was referred to variously as the Vernejales, Vermehali, or Varmehaly Negroes. Eventually they formed themselves into a couple groups under elected leaders. One of these groups settled in the mountains overlooking Guanaboa Vale under the bold, astute leader called Juan Lubola. A second group established their village at Los Vernejales under their leader Juan de Serras. Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, p. 161.

<sup>150</sup> Bryan Edwards quoted in Patterson, ‘Slavery and Slave Revolts’, pp. 230-31.

<sup>151</sup> Most substantial and permanent was that commanded by a ‘Spanish negro’ called Juan Lubolo (Juan de Bolas) in the fertile polje of Lluides Vale. Further to the west was the polink of the ‘Varmahaly Negroes’ under the command of Juan de Serras, and another lay in the region of Porus, in the modern parish of Manchester. There are also references to a settlement of Spanish negroes in the Blue Mountains. Craton, *Testing the Chains*, p. 70.

<sup>152</sup> Susan Dwyer Amussen, *Caribbean Exchanges. Slavery and the Transformation of English Society, 1640-1700*, (Chapel Hill, 2007), p. 37.

<sup>153</sup> In the summer of 1664 the Council of Jamaica ‘ordered that Mr. Noy go to the Vermexales negroes...to now whether they will accept Sir. Chas Lyttelton’s articles.’ Proclamation of Sir Chas. Lyttelton, Deputy Governor, in accordance with the preceding Minutes of Council of Jan. 23 concerning the free negroes. PRO, CO 140/1, pp. 75-79; Edwards quoted in Patterson, ‘Slavery and Slave Revolts’, p. 231.

unsuccessful attempts to dislodge them. In August 1665, a special Council of War ordered that ‘the Varmahaly negroes having again begun to rob and kill, the island be put in a posture of war, and every regiment under military discipline be regulated by a court martial.’<sup>154</sup> Under pressure from the Anglo-Jamaicans, the group retreated to the uninhabited northeastern side of the island.<sup>155</sup> From there they constantly harassed frontier settlers by attacking nascent plantations, taking supplies, farming implements, metal goods, cloth, salt, women, cattle, and pigs.<sup>156</sup>

For nearly fifteen years the ‘Vermahaly Negroes’ committed ‘murders, robberies, and other outrages’ in Clarendon Parish. Consequently, the Council in Jamaica ordered ‘that no person travel two miles from his dwelling place without being armed.’<sup>157</sup> Spanish Maroons forced changes in Jamaican society that further slowed the expansion of a settled plantation society. Their constant depredations forced the colony to remain on the defensive and regularly operate under martial law. To combat the maroons, Anglo-Jamaican officials raised regiments of planters and merchants, supplementing the losses of military men, to patrol remote areas otherwise diverting resources and men that might have been used in the developing plantations. The Maroons, however, proved to be superb guerrilla fighters, laying ambushes and picking off white troops as they marched through narrow passes in the mountains.<sup>158</sup> Maroon settlements physically limited the

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<sup>154</sup> PRO, CO 140/1, Minutes of a Council of War held at St. Jago de la Vega, August 1665, pp. 135-38.

<sup>155</sup> Patterson, ‘Slave and Slave Revolts’, p. 255.

<sup>156</sup> Sheridan, ‘The Maroons of Jamaica, 1730-1830: Livelihood, Demography, and Health’ in Gad Heuman (ed), *Out of the House of Bondage: Runaways, Resistance, and Marronage in Africa and the New World* (London: 1986), p. 152.

<sup>157</sup> PRO, CO 140/1, Minutes of the Council of Jamaica, 2 May 1670, pp. 189-96. This declaration occurred after the murder of five hunters and six small settlers in 1670. Craton, *Testing the Chains*, p. 74.

<sup>158</sup> Sheridan ‘The Maroons of Jamaica’, p.152.

expansion of the frontier since very few people were willing to clear and settle land too many miles away from settled white society.<sup>159</sup> Finally, the success of the maroons undoubtedly encouraged, or at least provided inspiration, to other would-be rebels laboring on plantations along the frontier.<sup>160</sup> Many rebels, after their initial uprising, quickly retreated to the mountains and other inaccessible areas within the colony: in 1672 when ‘certain negroes’ in St. Elizabeth parish murdered William Groudan and ‘took to the woods.’<sup>161</sup> In January 1673, the Council of Jamaica attempted to rein in a growing number of enslaved Africans who posed potential threats. They ordered that masters and overseers:

take care to keep their negroes within their own plantations, and permit none to go thence without a ticket mentioning their number and names, and what merchandizes they carry with them, and what allowances are granted to them to trade.<sup>162</sup>

The council was sure that the safety of all planters would result in restraining communication between slaves.

During 1673, in the thinly peopled parish of St. Ann, around 200 enslaved Africans killed their master and about thirteen other whites. After plundering several smaller estates and procuring arms and ammunition they retreated to secure positions in

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<sup>159</sup> Craton suggests that ‘although Jamaica is only 140 miles long and forty-five miles wide, it presented almost an ideal maroon habitat. Tropical, fertile, and watered, the island was not only mountainous but, being made mostly of limestone, wonderfully pocked and broken in its topography. The natural cover of dense forest or savanna was coupled with karst limestone features such as ‘haystack hills’, caves, poljes, and ‘cockpits’. This landscape provided hiding places at the very edges of plantations. Craton, *Testing the Chains*, p. 67.

<sup>160</sup> See Michael Craton, *Testing the Chains*.

<sup>161</sup> PRO, CO 140/1, Minutes of the Council of Jamaica, pp. 305-06.

<sup>162</sup> PRO, CO 140/1, Minutes of the Council of Jamaica, 8 January 1673, pp. 334-36.

the mountains around the borders of Clarendon, St. Elizabeth, and St. Ann. The first party of whites that went after them was ‘nearly destroyed’, and this ‘not only discouraged other parties from going against them but also encouraged many other Negroes to rise, throw off their chains and join up with them.’ This group of rebels formed the nucleus of the Leeward Maroons.<sup>163</sup> In 1676, the Council of Jamaica reported another group of ‘rebellious negroes’ in St. Mary’s parish had been causing trouble for nearly two months.<sup>164</sup> Two years later another revolt broke out within five miles of Spanish Town when around one hundred rebels rose up and murdered their master and about twenty more of his family after which they:

betooke themselves to the woods and mountains on the northside of the island, where they soon joyn’d with other runaway Negroes, and ever since have often done much mischeife in St. Mary’s and St. Ann’s precinct by cutting off many famallys and have murther’d neare one hundred Christian souls, men, women, and children at all advantages.<sup>165</sup>

Another rebellion occurred in March 1682:

when Madam Greg’s Negroes slaves, being in number one hundred and five, rose in the night and murther’d fifteen Christian soules...[and] betooke themselves to the wood, destroying many people, and cutting off many whole famally on ye northside, at advantages, and then retreated to their lurking places; which all that yeare putt the island to great troble and expence in keeping three hundred men out

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<sup>163</sup> Patterson, ‘Slave and Slave Revolts’, p. 256.

<sup>164</sup> PRO, CO 140/3, Journal of the Council Minutes of Jamaica, 23 January 1676, pp. 449-53.

<sup>165</sup> Buisseret, *Jamaica in 1687. The Taylor Manuscript at the National Library of Jamaica* (Kingston, 2008), p. 276.

in parties after them, by whose vigalancy severall of ‘em were slain, other taken prisoners, and the rest scatter’d and routed.<sup>166</sup>

The following summer in June 1683:

slaves belonging to Collonel Ivey, at his plantation in the precinct of Vere, nigh Withywood, being number 180, most of ‘em Carrammantine Negroas, had all conspièred with one consent to rebel, cut off their master, and murther his whole family, and then proceed in the lick manner against the other neibouring plantations.<sup>167</sup>

Between 1685 and 1686 there were several more revolts, the participants of which joined with the growing bands of rebels encamped in the leeward part of the island. The underpinnings of a large-scale rebellion were ever present. In May 1685, the Council of Jamaica resolved that ‘in consequence of recent disturbances, the negroes’ market at the River’s mouth be suppressed.’ They reckoned that ‘the liberty given to the Negroes to give a market...had been the ocassion of the disturbance.’<sup>168</sup> Nevertheless in early August 1685, 150 slaves belonging to Mrs. Grey, at Guanaboa, rose in rebellion. After seizing all the arms on Grey’s estate, they then attacked another plantation, where they killed one white and wounded another. The rebels, who then sought refuge in the hills afterward, successfully combated a detachment of seventy soldiers. In the end, of the 150 slaves who rebelled, seven were killed in battle, thirty were captured, and fifty surrendered. The rest remained at large and were unsuccessfully hunted by Captain

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<sup>166</sup> Buisseret, *Jamaica in 1687*, pp. 274-75.

<sup>167</sup> PRO, CO 140/4, Minutes of the Council of Jamaica, 11 May 1685, pp. 84-85.

<sup>168</sup> PRO, CO 140/4, Minutes of the Council of Jamaica, 11 May 1685, pp. 84-85.

Davis and his party of Indian trackers.<sup>169</sup> The problem continued and as a ‘consequence of lack of funds’ the Council ordered that ‘the military parties serving against the negroes were discharged. Order for every parish to provide for its own security by its own party or guard.’<sup>170</sup>

Taylor mentions another rebellion that occurred in December 1685. He noted that: at which time all the Negroes on Port Royal had combined themselves together to make a generall insurection...[and] cunningly contrived thus; to fiere to town in the night, and then whilst ye inhabitants had bin employed in extinguishing the flames, every Negroa to have seized his master’s arms and soe have made a violent onset.<sup>171</sup>

In February 1686 a Council of Jamaica was called ‘to advise as to the means of suppressing the rebel negroes who are now more formidable than ever before.’ They ordered to raise twelve parties to pursue the rebels.<sup>172</sup> By April the regiments killed a leading figure, Coffee, and subsequently disbanded all but three of the regiments.<sup>173</sup> Nevertheless, ‘operations of the parties against the rebellious negroes’ continued into the spring of 1687. Despite destroying provisions, grounds, and huts and cutting the springs they set for wild hogs the rebels ‘seemed to be dispersed into smaller gangs which would never await attack.’<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>169</sup> PRO, CO 138/5, Molesworth to Whitehall; PRO, CO 140/4, Minutes of a Council of War held at Jamaica, 1 August 1685, pp. 89-90; Patterson, ‘Slave and Slave Revolts’, pp. 256-57.

<sup>170</sup> PRO, CO 140/4, 12 January 1686, pp. 104-05.

<sup>171</sup> Buisseret, *Jamaica in 1687*, p. 277.

<sup>172</sup> PRO, CO 140/4, Minutes of Council of Jamaica, pp. 105-06.

<sup>173</sup> PRO, CO 140/4, Minutes of the Council of Jamaica, 8 April 1686, pp. 109-10.

<sup>174</sup> PRO, CO 140/4, Minutes of the Council of Jamaica, 26 April 1687, pp. 168-

Five years later, in July 1690, between 400 and 500 enslaved Africans belonging to Sutton's (Slater's) plantation in the parish of Clarendon killed the overseer and after seizing all the arms they could carry, proceeded to the next estate, where they killed the white overseer and set the house afire. The troops were called out, and twelve of the rebels were killed in the ensuing engagement. In the course of the following month, sixty women and children and ten men surrendered. With 318 of them still at large, however, Governor Inchiquin feared 'that (it) will be very dangerous to the mountain plantations.' This group eventually joined the ranks with the Leeward gang already established in the mountains 'and greatly strengthened their party, having good arms and plenty of ammunition.'<sup>175</sup>

In the midst of the chaos created by the earthquake and the French invasion, enslaved Africans again revolted and the Council of Jamaica sent parties after them. They also ordered that a list of all 'free negroes' be drawn up.<sup>176</sup> The drain on the white population engendered a real fear about the security of the island. The merchants of Jamaica complained to the Council of Trade and Plantations that 'without sufficient succours the most considerable island belonging to the King abroad may be lost to the enemy or left to the mercy of the negroes, to the ruin of the people, the dishonour of the nation and the discouragement of the Colonies in general.'<sup>177</sup>

Smaller revolts occurred in 1694, 1696, 1702, and 1704, mainly on the northern coast, with the rebels slipping off to join other slave fugitives hiding in the mountains,

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<sup>175</sup> PRO, CO 138/7, Inchiquin to Lords; Patterson, 'Slave and Slave Revolts', p. 258.

<sup>176</sup> PRO, CO 140/5, Minutes of the Council of Jamaica, 16 December 1694, pp. 298.

<sup>177</sup> PRO, CO 137/4, Memorial of several Jamaica merchants to Council of Trade and Plantations, 27 July 1697, p. 170.



setting the stage for the Maroon War of 1720 and 1739.<sup>178</sup> In this way maroons and fugitive slaves continued to distress the island for upwards of forty years, during which time forty-four acts of Assembly were passed, and at least £240,000 were expended for their suppression.<sup>179</sup> Ultimately, the frontier remained unsettled because of the north side of the island ‘tis not half soe well settled and planted or inhabited as the southside, by reason of many runaway Negros, which lie there lurking in the woods and mountains, and have of late done much mischief there’.<sup>180</sup>

### **Conclusion: A Cocktail of Calamities**

Richard Dunn suggested that ‘of all the English Caribbean colonies in the seventeenth century, Jamaica was by far the most boisterous and disorderly.’ More than three hundred years earlier, in 1670, John Style, a fifteen-year resident of the island, offered a more biting observation about the island: ‘if the most savage heathens...[were]...present, they might learn cruelty and oppression.’<sup>181</sup> Others called its main port, Port Royal, the ‘wickedest city in the west.’<sup>182</sup> An English clergyman, Francis Crow, arrived in Jamaica in 1687 and ‘found sin very high and religion very low.’<sup>183</sup>

Yet, for all the problems and poor reputation, the island in 1655 was one of endless possibilities. Exploiting those possibilities, however, proved to be a difficult

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<sup>178</sup> Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, pp. 260-61.

<sup>179</sup> Edwards quoted in Patterson, ‘Slavery and Slave Revolts’, p. 232.

<sup>180</sup> Buisseret, *Jamaica in 1687*, p. 112. The north side was inhospitable to planters until the Maroon Treaties of 1739-40.

<sup>181</sup> PRO, CO 1/25, John Style to ‘the Principle Secretary of State, Whitehall, 4 January 1670, pp. 1-4.

<sup>182</sup> Zahedieh, ‘“The Wickedest City in the World”: Port Royal, Commercial Hub of the Seventeenth-Century Caribbean,’ in Verne Shepherd (ed), *Working Slavery, Pricing Freedom: Perspectives from the Caribbean, Africa, and the African Diaspora* (New York, 2002), pp. 3-20.

<sup>183</sup> Cadbury, ‘Conditions in Jamaica in 1687’, *Jamaican Historical Review* 3:2 (1957), pp. 52-57.

task. Like each of the Caribbean islands settled by the English in the seventeenth century, Jamaica had a distinct personality.<sup>184</sup> Jamaica was advantageously placed within the Caribbean. Although the island was thousands of miles away from the nearest English settlement it was strategically close to Spanish Cuba, French St. Domingue, and the Straits of Florida, the oceanic onramp to the Gulf Stream. This position benefited international, albeit oftentimes illegal, trade; yet, this isolation from other centres of English settlement left the island exposed and relatively defenseless. For the very first days after the conquest, those who settled the island were left largely on their own to develop the island, secure its borders, and develop its social, economic, religious, and political infrastructure. In many respects they failed to do so.

Their failures were not entirely their own fault because Jamaica lacked significant interest from outside investors and the home government. Neither Oliver Cromwell, the original inspiration for capturing the island from the Spanish, nor his successors felt disposed to spend money on it. Land was reserved for the state, but it was never developed and was finally abandoned in 1678. Other outside interests were equally reluctant to make direct investment in Jamaican agriculture.<sup>185</sup> Without capital or clear incentives to settle, English officials continued to struggle with the problem of convincing people to live in the island. Thus, the surviving local residents were left on

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<sup>184</sup> The island is physiographically diverse, containing relatively high mountains, coastal plains, arid interiors, swampy morasses, and karst topography. Temperatures and rainfall vary considerably depending on elevation and access to trade winds and coastal breezes, and variation in geological formations, soil types, and flora and fauna are equally pronounced in different regions. Its size eventually allowed for greater agricultural exploitation than in any other British colony.

<sup>185</sup> The dramatic profits of the early sugar days in Barbados were over. In general, absentee investment in sugar planting was very risky and generally unattractive proposition. Unwillingness in England to become heavily involved in the risky business of funding a distant colonial venture is reflected in the dispersed nature of Jamaican trade. See Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*.

their own to make what they could of the island's potential.

So, in 1692 when the earthquake struck, the island was contending with constant slave rebellions, a lack of labor brought about by the population drain of privateering, the inconsistency of the Royal African Company, and the draining of life by disease. Therefore, when Dickinson departed the island in 1696, planting was still in its infancy.<sup>186</sup> The earthquake, which was much more than a natural disaster, highlighted Jamaica's physical, economic, and political isolation. The devastation engendered a series of political squabbles that further divided Jamaicans. It opened the door for a French invasion. Moreover, the mercantile community, the hallmark of Jamaica and seemingly the only beacon of hope was swallowed up by the sea with the majority of their assets. Simply put, after the earthquake all the problems of the previous decades simply got worse.

Beyond the aforementioned issues, after the earthquake more immediate problems arose, as did the Jamaicans' sense of despair. Petty disputes, robberies, floating carcasses, and caring for the sick and wounded were all problems officials faced during the immediate aftermath of the earthquake. Sir William Beeston complained a year later that 'we have also, still, earthquakes pretty frequently, but not with violence enough to do ravine though sufficient to terrify.'<sup>187</sup> The condition of Port Royal left the island 'exposed to enemies by land and sea [because]...many of the guns of the forts are under

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<sup>186</sup> The warning signs for a great earthquake were apparent for several years approaching 1692. 'On Sunday 19 February 1688 there happened at Porta Royall a strong earthquack which continued for about the space of three minutes. The inhabitants were much afright'ned thereby, for it threw down three houses, and shatter'd the tiles off most houses, and did much damage to glass windows, and to glasses, and earthenware in shops.' Buisseret, *Jamaica in 1687*, p. 119.

<sup>187</sup> PRO, CO 137/1, Lieutenant-Governor Sir William Beeston to Lords of Trade and Plantations, 27 July 1693, pp. 56-57.

two fathoms of water.’ The earthquake also created alarm about slave unrest. ‘The loss of small arms,’ the president of the council lamented, ‘makes us very apprehensive about the slaves.’<sup>188</sup>

In March 1693, Sir William Beeston observed that ‘the island is in a very mean condition...[and] the whole country in a melancholy prospect’. He goes on to suggest that ‘the earthquake, sickness, and desertion of discontented people have carried off so many as to leave the island very thin of people’. Moreover he lamented that ‘everything is very dear, the sickness and calamities having terrified those who used to bring provisions from New England and North America from coming near us’.<sup>189</sup> Two years later he suggested that ‘the country has fallen into a very low condition under the calamities of the past four years by the taxes raised and the want of trade.’<sup>190</sup> This ‘want of trade’ had terrible effects on Jamaica’s recovery from the events of the early 1690s. Beeston related the condition of Jamaica to William Blathwayt:

We want all necessaries, and ships to carry away our produce, so that if this war hold on much longer these Colonies must come to nothing. No people come in, many die, some get away from fear, others because they are in debt, and many are pressed into the King's ships, which also frightens others away, so by many ways we decrease, which disheartens those that have interest and makes them talk of removing. The King's ships are in an ill condition from want of recruits of stores, provisions, necessaries, and also of officers and seamen; so that they are of great

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<sup>188</sup> PRO, CO 140/5, The President of Council of Jamaica to Lords of Trade and Plantations, 20 June 1692, pp. 187-88; PRO, CO 137/2, p. 192-93.

<sup>189</sup> PRO, CO 138/7, Sir William Beeston to Lords of Trade and Plantations, 23 March 1693, pp. 147-52; PRO, CO 137/3, pp. 10-11.

<sup>190</sup> PRO, CO 138/8, 24 August 1695, pp. 54-59; PRO, CO 137/1, pp. 260.

expense to the King, and by their wants hindered of being of much use to the country.<sup>191</sup>

In the midst of all this turmoil, Dickinson decided to leave the island. Beeston remarked about the general exodus: ‘the private Colonies also entice our people away daily, telling them of living there easy and quiet.’<sup>192</sup> Early in 1697 Beeston suggested that ‘by this [the problems of the last few years] we are much weakened, there are no seamen left to sail our vessels (by which trade is decayed), no men to man our privateers, and few men left in the country but masters of families.’ He continued, ‘moreover, the Northern plantations, that used to furnish us with provisions and necessities, come not near us, whereby provisions are become scarce and dear, which much discourages the inhabitants.’<sup>193</sup>

In many ways Dickinson was ‘pushed’ to leave the island but in other ways the uncertainty of Jamaica, as evidenced by the many complaints about a lack of provisions, supplies, and trade, ‘pulled’ Dickinson from island. In the summer of 1696, Dickinson, decided to leave for Philadelphia to escape the harsh reality of living in Jamaica during the 1690s and perhaps, also to exploit the potential created by the chaos of the preceding decades. Dickinson, his wife Mary, and their infant son Jonathan, aged six months, accompanied ten of Dickinson’s enslaved Africans, an Indian girl, a Philadelphia ship captain, and a salty Caribbean crew aboard the *Reformation* with a substantial cargo of trade goods and around 1,500 pieces of eight.

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<sup>191</sup> PRO, CO 137/4, 19 June 1696, p. 31.

<sup>192</sup> PRO, CO 137/4, Governor Sir William Beeston to Lords of Trade and Plantation, 22 July 1696, p. 40.

<sup>193</sup> PRO, CO 137/4, Governor Sir William Beeston to Council of Trade and Plantations, 27 January 1697, pp. 125-26.

In the wake of the *Reformation*, the struggling island of Jamaica continued to hobble along but fundamental changes were well in motion. Dickinson was embarking on a life-altering voyage; the Dickinson family was embarking on a trans-Atlantic mercantile empire; and, the island of Jamaica was leaving behind its impetuous childhood of the seventeenth century as it grew into a plantation colony. At the turn of the eighteenth century, Jamaica was finally *becoming Atlantic*.

### CHAPTER 3: SHIPWRECKED IN THE ATLANTIC WORLD

About One a Clock in the Moring we felt our Vessel strike some few strokes, and then she floated again for five or six Minutes, before she ran flat aground, where she beat violently at first; the Wind was violent; and it was very dark, that our Marriners could not see Land: The Seas broke over us, that we were in the quarter of an hour Floating in the Cabin. By this time we felt the Vessel not to strike often; but several of her Timbers were broken, and some Plank started; the Seas continued breaking over us, and no Land to be seen. We concluded to keep in the Vessel as long as she would hold together. About the third Hour this Morning, we supposed we saw Land at some considerable distance. And at this time we found the Water began to run out of the Vessel, and at Daylight we perceived we were upon the Shoar, on a Beach lying upon the Breach of the Sea; which, at time, as the Surges of the Sea reversed, was dry... We rejoyced at this our Preservation from the raging Seas; but at the same Instant feared the sad Consequence that followed.<sup>1</sup>

As the sun rose upon the mangled and beleaguered *Reformation*, on 23 October 1696, Dickinson and company found themselves hundreds of miles from the nearest European colony and stranded amongst Native Americans.<sup>2</sup> After avoiding French

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<sup>1</sup> *God's Protecting Providence. Man's Surest Help and Defence In the times of the greatest difficulty and most Imminent danger; Evidenced in the Remarkable Deliverance of divers Persons, From the devouring Waves of the Sea, amongst which they Suffered Shipwrack, And also, From the more cruelly devouring jawes of the inhumane Canibals of Florida. Faith related by one of the persons concerned therein, Jonathan Dickenson* (London, 1701), pp. 3-4. This edition of the journal is cited hereafter as *God's Protecting Providence*.

<sup>2</sup> The earliest historical reference to barkentines is 1693 and from then until about 1875 barkentines and schooners were not distinctly different types of ships. Samuel Galpin suggests that 'the American coasting and West Indies trade was the nursery where

pirates, the tumults of tropical weather separated Dickinson's small barkentine and its company of twenty-four passengers from the protection of a convoy bound for England via Philadelphia.<sup>3</sup> Eventually, the storm pushed the *Reformation* ashore as it tore apart amongst crashing waves along Florida's southeastern coast.<sup>4</sup> As Dickinson suggested in the quotation above, their prospects for survival were dire.<sup>5</sup>

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many variations of the fore-and-aft rig were developed. It is difficult to guess what Dickinson's barkentine looked like but Galpin 'imagines a small three-masted vessel, carrying square sails on the foremast only, one be might be close to the early topsail schooner or barkentine type.' Charles Andrews and Evangeline Walker Andrews, *Jonathan Dickinson's Journal or God's Protecting Providence. Being the Narrative of a Journey from Port Royal Jamaica to Philadelphia between August 23, 1696 and April 1, 1697* (New Haven, 1945) p. 133.

<sup>3</sup> As a result of the ongoing threat of French privateers in the Straights of Florida and the Bahamas, the *Reformation* sailed in a convoy of a dozen merchantmen under the protection of the *Hampshire*, Captain Fletcher. During their second day at sea 'a sloop from Port Royal [John Kelly]...gave an account of the French fleet's being at Cape Antonio'. A week later the *Reformation* 'lost sight of the *Hampshire* Frigate'. Nearly two weeks later, the *Reformation*, fighting contrary winds and 'fearing [they] were amongst the French fleet, stood off Havana preparing to negotiate the uncertainties of the Straights of Florida. Seven days later Dickinson wrote: 'this day the storm began at N.E.' Andrews and Andrews, *Jonathan Dickinson's Journal*, pp. 25-27.

<sup>4</sup> The *Reformation* ran aground on present-day Jupiter Island. Richard Limpeney, the mate, with a quadrant and seamen's calendar reckoned their latitude to be twenty-seven degrees and eight minutes. This positioning placed the castaways just south of the present-day St. Lucie Inlet. The castaways were marginally closer to St. Augustine than Havana at about 250 and 350 miles away respectively. Historians and anthropologists debate about exactly where Dickinson landed and the location of the Native American groups he describes. For the most recent and most thorough exploration of debates surrounding locations of places described in Dickinson's journal see: Alan Brech and J. F. Lanham, 'The Location of the Paramount Town of the Ais Indians and the General Location of the Indians of Santa Lucia', *The Florida Anthropologist*, 64:3-4 (2010), pp. 115-48.

<sup>5</sup> The castaways included twenty-four people: Jonathan Dickinson, his wife, Mary, their infant child, Jonathan, a Quaker missionary Robert Barrow on his way home from a proselytising tour of the Caribbean, and Dickinson's kinsman, Benjamin Allen. The crew included five common sailors: Solomon Cresson, Joseph Buckley, Thomas Fownes, Thomas Jemmet, and Nathaniel Randall. The captain, Joseph Kirle hailed from Philadelphia, he and his mate, Richard Limpeney, were accompanied by John Hilliard, the master's boy and Ben, the master's slave. Dickinson brought with him ten enslaved Africans: Peter, London, Jack, Cesar, Cajoe, Hagar, Sarah, Bella, Susanna, and Quensa. Venus, an Indian girl, died en route from Jamaica.



Florida in the late seventeenth century was a world apart from settled society. It was a savage wilderness rife with uncertainty and teeming with innumerable insecurities.<sup>6</sup> For Dickinson, the storm utterly destroyed the promise of Philadelphia; Jamaica, at least in relative terms, might have seemed a bit more comforting in light of the hopelessness that this ‘very dismal’ place evoked.<sup>7</sup> Yet the peninsula, despite its unfamiliarity to Dickinson, his family, his enslaved Africans, and the Caribbean crew, was still very much a part of an emerging Atlantic community. Florida’s transition from colonial outpost to a well-settled plantation colony never occurred; therefore, an examination of the conditions in the colony at the turn of the eighteenth century offer an interesting counterpoint to the previous discussion of Jamaica’s growing pains.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, Florida, like Jamaica, was in the process of becoming *Atlantic* at the turn of the eighteenth century.<sup>9</sup>

While Florida never produced the wealth of the Caribbean, it did represent a geographical and cultural crossroads where Europeans, Native Americans, and Africans

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<sup>6</sup> Because Spaniards failed to develop permanent settlements along the southeastern coast, we might assume that the Native American polities that existed in 1513 continued into the 1690s and, though populations may well have been lowered from pre-Columbian levels, the Native Americans continued to live much as they had, while adjusting to the new opportunities presented by Europeans.

<sup>7</sup> *God’s Protecting Providence*, p. 4.

<sup>8</sup> Amy Bushnell suggests several factors that retarded the growth of Spanish Florida including ‘the crown’s protective attitude toward natives, the obstacles of trade, the shortage of currency, the problems of food distribution, the slow Spanish increase in population and the rapid native decrease, and the exhausting wars.’ Bushnell, *The King’s Coffers. Proprietors of the Spanish Florida Treasury, 1565-1702* (Gainesville, 1981), pp. 1-14.

<sup>9</sup> One of the advantages of Atlantic history is that the paradigm allows historians to include places like Florida to provide better insights into the variety of Atlantic experiences possible during this period.

interacted in interestingly complicated ways.<sup>10</sup> Nearly every ship departing the Caribbean Sea passed the peninsula traveling along with the Gulf Stream Current toward the North Atlantic Drift and back to Europe.<sup>11</sup> English, French, Dutch, Spanish, Catholics, Protestants, Quakers, merchants, pirates, gold fleets, slavers: all types of peoples encompassing a multitude of economic, political, and social agendas passed by the peninsula every year for generations. Many of these trans-Atlantic travelers called along the east coast of Florida for freshwater, wood, and trade. In the process they created cross-cultural perceptions of the ‘other’ that influenced subsequent interactions and influenced the developmental direction of the peninsula.

Florida, because of its strategic position and seemingly boundless, but rarely realised, possibilities for profit, represented a considerable source of concern for the

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<sup>10</sup> The variegated nature of the castaways and Dickinson’s relation of individual reactions to the events along the east coast of Florida are particularly useful when discussing the complex relationship between Europeans, Africans, and Native Americans.

<sup>11</sup> The dominant ring of North Atlantic current revolves, more reliably than the wind circle, around the warm, usually calm, and weed-cluttered, Sargasso Sea. It is flanked on the west by one of the world’s greatest currents, the Gulf Stream, which can add 130 miles a day to the speed of a ship. This gargantuan water jet swings toward the east as it leaves the continental shelf near Cape Hatteras and begins to slow and meander off the south coast of Nova Scotia until it becomes indistinguishable in the North Atlantic Drift beyond the Grand Banks off Newfoundland. Ian Steele suggests that ‘the main patterns of the winds, currents, and marine biology have altered relatively little in the centuries since the discovery of the New World...[but] in this cooler phase [what some have called “the Little Ice Age (1550-1850)” the wind patterns of the North Atlantic were apparently a little less regular...[and] the strength of the Gulf Stream also seems to have lessened in this cooler period.’ Ian Steele, *The English Atlantic. An Exploration of Communication and Community, 1675-1740* (Oxford, 1986), pp. 6-7. Michael Jarvis suggests that ‘cooler waters would have produced a stronger but more erratic Gulf Stream flow and northeasterly winds and more frequent and intense mid-ocean storms’. Michael Jarvis, *In the Eye of All Trade. Bermuda, Bermudians, and the Maritime Atlantic World, 1680-1783* (Chapel Hill, 2010), p. 13.

Spanish, English, and French colonial officials in the early eighteenth century.<sup>12</sup> For Spain, Florida, at the end of the seventeenth century, represented a precious northern buffer zone for an increasingly indefensible empire. For the English, Florida was a source of both prestige and problems. At the turn of the eighteenth century, *La Florida* (present-day Georgia and Florida) represented the last piece, albeit one dominated by Native Americans, in an expanding North American Atlantic seaboard.<sup>13</sup> Conversely, the Spanish colony provided a vexing haven for runaway-slaves from South Carolina.<sup>14</sup> These threats needed to be nullified to allow the expansion of South Carolinian plantations and, more importantly, for an English consolidation of power along the North Atlantic seaboard. The French, from settlements along the Mississippi, looked upon the same area with jealous eyes as well. Florida, particularly the Gulf Coast, represented a necessary piece in linking French possessions, via the Mississippi, in Canada to those in the American South and the Caribbean.<sup>15</sup>

Yet for all the potential for study, this period, the late-seventeenth century and the geographic area, specifically southeastern Florida, remain relatively understudied by Atlantic world historians. In a recent volume on the transformation of the Gulf South, Daniel Unser Jr. remarked on the ‘lingering indifference shown by many early American historians’ toward this region despite the ‘central role of religion in colonialism and the

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<sup>12</sup> Paul Hoffman, *Florida's Frontiers* (Bloomington, 2002); Daniel Usner *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves in the Frontier Exchange Economy. The Lower Mississippi Valley before 1783* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina, 1992).

<sup>13</sup> Eventually in 1763, the British took Florida. After the American War of Independence, however, British officials returned the problematic peninsula to the Spanish.

<sup>14</sup> Jane Landers, *Black Society in Spanish Florida* (Urbana, 1999), pp. 23-60.

<sup>15</sup> For an interesting contemporary account of the potential of the American Southeast see: Daniel Coxe, *A Description of the English Province of Carolana, by the Spaniards call'd Florida, and by the French La Louisiane*, (London, 1722).

contest among empires for Indian trade and territory.<sup>16</sup> Usner suggests that for most of the last two centuries, historians examined Gulf Coast colonisation in the shadow of a nationalist history of the United States that privileged its founding English colonies. Usner further contends that historians actively shaped representations of life in places like seventeenth-century Florida to contrast with life along the Atlantic seaboard of North America purposefully ‘essentialising’ cultural differences between European nations in order to explain why England’s colonies purportedly grew and expanded more successfully than others.<sup>17</sup> Amy Bushnell suggests that ‘students of Atlantic history focused on the societies, plantations, and commerce of the English, French, Dutch, and Portuguese colonists and on enslaved Africans, leaving Spanish colonists to their own historians and Indians to ethno-historians.’<sup>18</sup> Jack Greene contends that ‘the new multicultural interest in the non-British roots of United States civilization...has remained relatively unconcerned with large cultural worlds to which the areas of Spanish and French penetration were attached...[thus] early American historians [continue] to be largely uninformed about the extensive and rich historiography produced...on those larger Spanish and French cultural worlds.’<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Daniel Usner Jr., ‘The Significance of the Gulf South in Early American History’, in Richard Brown (ed), *Coastal Encounters. The Transformation of the Gulf South in the Eighteenth Century* (Lincoln, 2007), p. 13.

<sup>17</sup> Usner, ‘The Significance of the Gulf South in Early American History’ in *Coastal Encounters*, p. 14.

<sup>18</sup> Amy Bushnell, ‘Indigenous America and the Limits of the Atlantic World, 1493-1825’, in Jack Greene and Philip Morgan (eds), *Atlantic History. A Critical Appraisal* (Oxford, 2009), p. 191.

<sup>19</sup> Greene further suggests that ‘such de-contextualization cannot be expected to produce comprehensive understandings of the histories of the areas that suffer it, much less to enrich them’. Green, ‘Hemispheric History and Atlantic History’, in Greene and Morgan, *Atlantic History*, pp. 300-01.

Therefore, I have several objectives in this chapter examining Jonathan Dickinson's journal of his brief time in Florida. First and foremost, by utilising Dickinson's journal, this chapter places Florida in an Atlantic world context and seeks to integrate Native Americans into that story to illustrate that Florida was not simply an isolated outpost and a string of missions. Rather, Florida, as early as the turn of the eighteenth century, was firmly entrenched in an expanding and evolving Atlantic world.<sup>20</sup> As an area of cultural clashes and political and economic maneuvering between various Europeans and Native Americans, Florida witnessed many trans-national cultural, ideological, and material exchanges. Examining Florida as an 'Atlantic area' provides an interesting opportunity to explore how various Native American groups reconciled an evolving Atlantic world with their traditional worldview, intertribal relations, and their relationships with Europeans.<sup>21</sup> Florida also provides an opportunity for historians to look outward from the interior toward the wide Atlantic to see how large international currents, such as political ideology, religious ideology, and material desires, affected

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<sup>20</sup> Historians of Florida typically treat the peninsula in isolation and rarely endeavor to integrate Florida historiography into an Atlantic world framework. There are two primary veins of scholarship on early Florida: one addresses Native Americans prior to European arrival and their subsequent reactions to the Spanish. Another focuses on Spanish efforts to settle the peninsula. The relationship of Native Americans to other Europeans and the larger Atlantic world receive occasional commentary but remain largely unexplored. Consequently, the traditional historical narrative suggests, despite nearly 150 years of Spanish efforts, that Florida remained a provincial backwater valued only for its strategic position at St. Augustine.

<sup>21</sup> One of the major criticisms of Atlantic history, as suggested by Jack Greene, is that by focusing on lands bordering the Atlantic Ocean historians deflect attention away from inland populations and their role in the Atlantic world. Furthermore, with an explicitly Atlantic focus, historians seeking to illustrate the connections that tied the various areas of the Atlantic together do so at the expense of the development of local areas without much concern about how those connections and trans-national relations affected the internal histories of the areas they connected. Greene and Morgan, 'Introduction: The Present Stat of Atlantic History, in Greene and Morgan, *Atlantic History*, pp. 5-7.

local circumstances. Cross-cultural exchanges impacted both people along the coast and also those throughout the interior of the American Southeast. Daniel Richter suggests that ‘as the seventeenth century gave way to the eighteenth... eastern North America was not longer a “new world” for anyone.’<sup>22</sup>

Thus, this chapter directly engages several historical interpretations of Dickinson’s interactions with the Native Americans along the coast of southeastern Florida. The proceeding analysis suggests that previous historical interpretations, by failing to consider the directives of the Native Americans, misrepresent the actions of the historical actors in Dickinson’s journal.<sup>23</sup> Finally, this chapter examines the complex interplay of competing Native American groups and different Europeans along the east coast of Florida, as well as the greater American Southeast, at the end of the seventeenth century to illustrate how Native Americans actively participated in, and in some cases dominated, exchanges with Europeans and the European struggle for control of the American South.<sup>24</sup>

In the end, this chapter illustrates the extraordinary pace at which Native Americans and Europeans adapted to the vast changes of the period and made decisions based on both local and trans-Atlantic influences.<sup>25</sup> Contingency by all parties, European and Native American, marked these exchanges and for the first time, Dickinson’s

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<sup>22</sup> Daniel Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country. A Native History of Early America* (Cambridge, 2001), p. 151.

<sup>23</sup> This chapter particularly engages the single sustained commentary on Dickinson’s journal: Andrews and Andrews, *God’s Protecting Providence*.

<sup>24</sup> Richter suggests that ‘facing eastward, the most remarkable characteristic of the early eighteenth century becomes neither conflict nor amity but instead the degree to which Indian and Euro-American—and particularly British American—histories moved along parallel paths in a single, even more consolidated, transatlantic imperial world.’ Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country*, p. 151.

<sup>25</sup> Reinier Jansen first published Jonathan Dickinson’s journal in 1699 in Philadelphia.

contingency plans were a matter of life and death. Contingency, as also occurred in Jamaica, greatly influenced the development of this transitional period. While individual contingencies influenced the development of the Anglo-Atlantic particularly in isolated colonies and along frontier and boarder zones, the failure of individuals to negotiate similar uncertainties is the story of the late-seventeenth century Florida.<sup>26</sup>

### **Native American Background**

During their two-month, 250-mile trek from present day Jupiter Island to Saint Augustine, Dickinson and company interacted with three autonomous Native American groups, the Jobé, the Santaluces, and the Ais, as well as several mission-reduced Native American groups.<sup>27</sup> Influenced by prior experiences and popular perceptions of the ‘other’, each group held distinct expectations, prejudices, and attitudes about interactions with outsiders. Native Americans had interacted with Europeans along Florida’s east

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<sup>26</sup> Even though the Spanish fiercely defended their vast American colonial empire, making Florida solvent proved to be impossible. Notwithstanding the scarcity of Spanish settlers, La Florida witnessed determined efforts by Jesuit and Franciscan missionaries to convert the region’s native peoples. David Webber suggests Spanish ‘missionaries failed to advance permanently, defend effectively, or Hispanize deeply North American frontiers in the seventeenth century.’ Paul Hoffman suggests, ‘Spain normally stood on the defensive in La Florida,’ frequently failing to protect and respect friendly Indians to resolve friction between settlers and priests, or to regularise royal support through subsidies (*situados*) directed from Mexico or Cuba. Ultimately Spanish Florida was not prepared for the challenges raised by the founding of Charleston in 1670 and the relentless, and sometimes violent, expansion of Anglo-America settlers into Carolina and Georgia. The Spanish was forced to recognise the permanence of the English settlement of Carolina in 1670 in the Treaty of Madrid. Two years later construction of the *Castillo San Marcos* began. The preceding quotations were excised from: Brown (ed), *Coastal Encounters*, pp. 3-4.

<sup>27</sup> Dickinson and company spent just over two months along the east coast of Florida, a month of which was spent at the Jece, the paramount Ais village south of present-day Cape Canaveral. For general discussion of the Native Americans along Florida’s east coast see: John Hann, *Indians of Central and South Florida, 1513-1763* (Gainesville, 2003); Milanich, *Florida Indians and the Invasion from Europe* (Gainesville, 1995), pp. 52-60, 63-69, 79-92; Eugene Lyon, ‘More Light on the Indians of the Ays Coast’, (Unpublished Manuscript, on file at P.K. Young Library, University of Florida, Gainesville, 1967).

coast for nearly two centuries before Dickinson and company arrived in 1696.<sup>28</sup> The interactions, most often between the Spanish and Native Floridians along the east coast, had a long and often unsavory tenure.<sup>29</sup> In general, Native American interactions with Northern Europeans are episodic but they offer insight into how Native American groups developed different opinions about separate groups of Europeans. Due to the relatively sparse documentary record, scholars have been forced to rely on vignettes, like Dickinson's shipwreck, to examine European and Native American relationships south of the Spanish mission provinces.<sup>30</sup> Therefore, it is important to remember that these relationships were not static and that treatment of European castaways varied according to time and place. Native Americans, however, consistently and consciously incorporated their world-view into the expanding European colonial endeavor.<sup>31</sup> James

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<sup>28</sup> Lyon details a collection of Spanish and Native American interactions along Florida's east coast during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

<sup>29</sup> Peter Wood suggests that 'during the initial five or six generations of contact with slave raiders, European viruses, and Christian missionaries, Florida's native population declined enormously. Peter Wood, 'The Changing Population of the Colonial South: An Overview by Race and Region, 1685-1790', in Peter Wood, Gregory A. Waselkov, and M. Thomas Hatley (eds), *Powhatan's Mantle. Indians in the Colonial Southeast* (Lincoln, 1989), p.51-56.

<sup>30</sup> In the small body of historical literature which touches directly upon these Native American groups, eyewitness accounts are limited to the Menendez party or its chroniclers, Spanish governmental, military or religious records following initial conquest, and a few outside accounts. Lyon, 'More Light on the Indians of the Ays Coast', p. 4. Lyons discusses the historiography up to the 1960s in this unpublished paper as well. Milanich suggests that without Dickinson's account 'we would know little about the Hobe or the Ais, to the north. Milanich, *Florida Indians and the Invasion from Europe*, p. 56.

<sup>31</sup> See Daniel K. Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country*; Karen Ordahl Kupperman, *Indians and English. Facing Off in Early America* (Ithaca, 2000); Peter Wood, Gregory Waselkov and M. Thomas Hatley (eds), *Powhatan's Mantle*; Cynthia Van Zandt, *Brothers among Nations. The Pursuit of Intercultural Alliances in Early America, 1580-1660* (Oxford, 2008); Steven Oatis, *A Colonial Complex. South Carolina's Frontiers in the Era of the Yamasee War, 1680-1730* (Lincoln, 2004); Alan Gallay, *Indian Slave Trade. The Rise of the English Empire in the American Southeast, 1670-1717* (New Haven, 2002).



Axtell suggests that ‘since the Spanish flotas contained black Africans and light-skinned Spaniards as well as more familiar brown-skinned Indian people from Central and South America, the Floridian’s world view had to expand to incorporate and account for these strangers and geographies and cultures from where they came’.<sup>32</sup>

The introduction of Africans to this complicated web of interaction only further illustrates the dynamic nature of the multi-cultural world of late-seventeenth century Florida. Enslaved Africans accompanied many of Florida’s early exploration expeditions, worked in and around St. Augustine, and occasionally ran away to Native American villages to the south.<sup>33</sup> Bushnell suggests that a considerable number of enslaved Africans ran off and intermarried with the Ais during the seventeenth century.<sup>34</sup> Jane Landers further contends that Africans realised the benefits associated with their proximity to autonomous Native American groups along Florida’s east coast. For example, in 1603 the Ais gave refuge to seven enslaved Africans from St. Augustine. Five were later recaptured but two others were said to have married Indians and were never retrieved.<sup>35</sup> These episodic encounters provided historians with opportunities to

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<sup>32</sup> Axtell further suggests that ‘this is never a small undertaking because it involves a major adjustment of a people’s ethnocentric sense of uniqueness at the navel of the universe. If it does not reduce their sense of superiority, it certainly complicates it by introducing disturbing intimations of cultural relativism. James Axtell, *The Indians’ New South. Cultural Change in the Colonial Southeast* (Baton Rouge, 1997), p. 14.

<sup>33</sup> Jane Landers suggests that ‘enslaved Africans first entered the region in significant numbers in 1526. Landers, ‘Africans and Native Americans on the Spanish Florida Frontier’, in Matthew Restall, *Beyond Black and Red. African-Native Relations in Colonial Latin America* (Albuquerque, 2005), p. 55.

<sup>34</sup> Bushnell, *The King’s Coffin*, p. 22.

<sup>35</sup> Landers, *Black Society in Spanish Florida* (Urbana, 1999), p. 287.

examine how Native Americans adjusted to their involvement in the expanding European colonial endeavor.<sup>36</sup>

Native American integration of the European colonial endeavor into their worldview, however, should not be taken for granted. Unlike the sedentary, agricultural people of northern Florida, who in large part rendered obedience to the Spanish king and his colonial representatives and accepted Christianity, the Native Americans of central and south Florida typically maintained their autonomy.<sup>37</sup> Fewer contacts with the Spanish may have contributed to these groups' ability to maintain relative autonomy. Jerald Milanich argues that the Spanish showed little interest in the Native American groups along the Florida southeast coast because of their small numbers and non-agrarian lifestyle provided little material for the colonists at St. Augustine.<sup>38</sup> Milanich further suggests that the distance from St. Augustine made maintaining missions in south Florida nearly impossible.<sup>39</sup> Fierce resistance to foreign intrusion also limited efforts to settle, proselytise, and trade further south along the peninsula.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> For a general background of slaves in early Spanish Florida see: Landers, 'Africans and Native Americans on the Spanish Frontier', pp. 54-62.

<sup>37</sup> The native groups of central and southern Florida did not farm maize and probably did not cultivate any crops. Villages and populations were probably smaller and less densely distributed than in northern Florida. Consequently, the establishment of missions and the control of native populations were much more difficult in the southern two-thirds of the state than in the northern third. Milanich, *Florida Indians and the Invasion from Europe*, p 34.

<sup>38</sup> Milanich, *Laboring in the Fields of our Lord. Spanish Missions and Southeast Indians* (Gainesville, 2006), p. 35.

<sup>39</sup> Milanich, *Laboring in the Fields of our Lord*, p. 35.

<sup>40</sup> Several missionary and military operations south of Cape Canaveral failed during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. A final missionary effort south of Lake Okeechobee (Calusa territory) took place two years after Dickinson departed St. Augustine but like previous attempts this final attempt failed because of fierce Native American resistance. By 1680, however, friars had begun to work among Mayaca-speaking peoples whom Dickinson identified as Ais. None of these missions, however, involved peoples living immediately along the coast. For a description of late-

The Ais Indians dominated the central southeast coast of Florida.<sup>41</sup> They lived from present-day Cape Canaveral southward into St. Lucie County. The influence and mandate of the chief of Ais extended as far south as the upper keys at least in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.<sup>42</sup> The evidence, however, is conflicting regarding the place of the Jobé within the Ais Province during the third quarter of the seventeenth century.<sup>43</sup> It appears that the area from the Jeaga village, just south of Jobé, through Tequesta into the upper keys represented something of a unit apart from the Ais proper, even though they were within the region influenced by the Ais cacique's

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seventeenth century missionary attempts see: Hann, *Indians of Central and Southeast Florida*, pp.90-98; Hann, *Mission to the Calusa* (Gainesville, 1991).

<sup>41</sup> Two peoples, the Calusa and the Ais, dominated most of coastal south Florida and its immediate hinterland from the sixteenth century to the early years of the eighteenth century. The Calusa represented the most important aboriginal group in southern Florida in terms of population size and density, political and military power, and influence. In the sixteenth century and eighteenth centuries they inhabited the coastal region of southwestern Florida including Charlotte Harbor, Pine Island, San Carlos Bay, and Estero Bay. The Calusa were clearly the more influential of the two peoples, exercising hegemony over most of Florida southwest coast, the Keys, parts of Lake Okeechobee region, and, at times, even the Biscayne Bay area. Through alliance with the Ais or through prestige, the Calusa head chief received treasure from Spanish shipwrecks along Florida southeast coast. The chief of Ais was an ally of the Calusa head chief in the 1550s and 1560s and, possibly, something more—in view of the goods and people from shipwrecks he sent to Calusa's head chiefs in that era. Ais's chief exercised hegemony or had influence all the way down the southeast coast to Biscayne Bay and the first of the keys below it. Hann, *Indians of Central and South Florida, 1513-1763*, p. 2; Lyon, 'More Light on the Indians of the Ays Coast,' p. 3

<sup>42</sup> The Ais region encompassed the coast, the adjacent mainland, and probably a section of the St. Johns River in Brevard County. West of the Ais, in the south-central area of the state, from Orange County south into Osceola County and parts of Polk and Highland counties, lived another native group, the Jororo. To the north of the Jororo within the St. Johns River drainage, from Seminole County north to Lake George, were the Mayaca Indians. Two of these three groups, the Jororo and the Mayaca, are often mentioned together in Spanish documents. As a consequence of their location, the Jororo and the Mayaca remained relatively isolated from Spanish initiatives. It was only after the native populations at the northern missions were severely decimated that the Spaniards began missionary efforts in the 1690s. Milanich, *Invasion from Europe*, p. 63.

<sup>43</sup> Hann, *Indians of Central and South Florida*, p. 61.

hegemony.<sup>44</sup> Apparently, the Jobé represented the southern limit of Ais influence.<sup>45</sup> The Santaluces, a subsidiary Ais tribe, lived roughly halfway between the Jobé village and Jece, the paramount Ais village, on the mainland near Cape Canaveral. While none of these Native American groups maintained sustained contact with the Spanish at St. Augustine, Spanish relations influenced the Ais more than the other smaller groups. Nevertheless, the Ais, like the Jobé and the Santaluces, maintained relative autonomy in their interactions with the Spanish.<sup>46</sup> Experiences with the Spanish and the advantages and disadvantages associated with that contact varied according to a Native American proximity to St. Augustine.

From the first recorded encounter between Florida's Native Americans to the eve of Dickinson's arrival, Native Americans typically dominated their interactions with Europeans.<sup>47</sup> As a result of their less than felicitous interactions with Native Americans, the Spanish struggled to make a positive impact on the southeastern Native Americans.<sup>48</sup> In 1513, the exploratory mission of Juan Ponce de León, in need of provisions, sent men ashore in the vicinity of Jupiter Inlet, near the village of the Jobé Indians. Skirmishes

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<sup>44</sup> Hann, *Indians of Central and South Florida*, p. 200.

<sup>45</sup> During the early colonial period, native groups must have lived in coastal Broward County, because Spanish artifacts have been found there as well. Both the Jeaga and the Jobé, as well as other groups, are named in 1675 Spanish document that lists the groups on that Atlantic coast south of Cape Canaveral as the Ais, Santaluces, Jeagas, Jobé (Hobe), Viscaynos, and Matecumbes. The Viscaynos, from whom the modern Biscayne Bay derives its name, may be the Tequesta.

<sup>46</sup> This is evidenced by repeated Spanish failures to establish garrisons and missions to be detailed below.

<sup>47</sup> For a general first sustained overview of Spanish-Native American interactions see: Charles Higgs, 'Spanish Contacts with the Ais (Indian River) Country', *Florida Historical Quarterly*, 21:1 (1942), pp. 25-39.

<sup>48</sup> Milanich, *Florida's Indians from Ancient Times to Present* (Gainesville, 1998), p. 134.

took place and the Spaniards kidnapped one Native American to be used as a guide.<sup>49</sup>

The negative reaction to the arrival of Ponce de León might indicate a history of unwelcome voyages (possibly slavers) to Florida's east coast.<sup>50</sup> Throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries intermittent contact continued along the southeast coast between the Native Americans and Spanish survivors of shipwrecks as well as Spanish slavers.<sup>51</sup> Generally, Native Americans enslaved the survivors or killed them on first encounter. After the initial conflict with Ponce de León and Caribbean slavers, shipwreck victims could expect little mercy from the Native Americans along Florida southeast coast.<sup>52</sup>

Occasionally, the Spanish received friendly receptions and promises of allegiance from Native American leaders.<sup>53</sup> Ambiguous allegiances usually proved to be short-lived as initially good relations soured after mistreatment.<sup>54</sup> Certain occasions and interactions, however, provided great benefits for the Ais but the immediate goals of the caciques typically dictated the nature of these interactions. For example, the salvaging of Spanish

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<sup>49</sup> Hann, *Indians of Central and South Florida*, p. 1.

<sup>50</sup> Although slave raids and shipwrecks were sporadic and unannounced, Spanish entradas into the interior were large, noisy, and soon predictable in their methods. Axtell, *The Indians' New South*, p. 15.

<sup>51</sup> For a general overview of first contacts between Native American and the Spanish see: Jerald Milanich, and Susan Milbrath (eds), *First Encounters. Spanish Explorations in the Caribbean and the United States, 1492-1570* (Gainesville, 1989).

<sup>52</sup> Hann, *Indians of Central and South Florida*, p. 12.

<sup>53</sup> In 1565, Pedro Menendez de Avilés established 'good relations with Cacique of Ays'. In 1580, Governor Pedro Menendez announced the 'establishment of peace in the area of the Ays coast.' In 1605, 'caciques visit St. Augustine and agree to maintain peace and send some Indians for Christian instruction. In 1607, Governor Pedro de Ybarra reported that 'conditions are now safe along a 100-league stretch of Florida coast'. In 1628, Governor Borja reported that the caciques of the south coast are happy and the area is now secure and the Indians have renounced their former relations with the English and the Dutch. Lyon, 'More Light on the Indians of the Ays Coast', pp. 27-32.

<sup>54</sup> Hann, *Indians of Central and South Florida*, p. 78.

ships and the division of the spoils among chiefs may have created a cause for positive relations with Europeans:

I desire to speak of the riches found by the Indians of Ais, which is perhaps were as much as a million...or over, in bars of silver, in gold, and in articles of jewelry made by the hands of Mexican Indians, which the [ship] passengers were bringing with them.<sup>55</sup>

James Axtell suggests that ‘Floridians eagerly collected these metals from the wrecks, not because they appreciated their monetary value in European standards—they did not—but because of their color, brilliance, and possibly weight and their uses as media for their own artistic forms’.<sup>56</sup> Eugene Lyon suggests that there is evidence for shipwrecks from the Spanish gold fleets of 1554, 1536, 1618, 1622, 1634, and 1715 in the area inhabited by the Ais.<sup>57</sup> Lyon contends that ‘salvaging became a persistent and ingrained part of the culture’ of the Ais.<sup>58</sup> Conversely, if we consider that only one shipwreck from the gold fleets occurred each generation, Lyon may have over-stated their historical importance.<sup>59</sup>

In effort to curtail or at least regularize the practice of salvaging, Spanish officials attempted to negotiate peace agreements with their Native American counterparts.

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<sup>55</sup> D’ Escalante Fontenada quoted in Milanich, *Invasion from Europe*, p. 42.

<sup>56</sup> Axtell, *The Indians’ New South*, p. 13.

<sup>57</sup> In addition to ship lost out of the *flotas*, many other vessels wrecked on the reefs and sandbars along the Ais coast. The southernmost of the ships of Jean Ribault’s ill-starred 1565 expedition was lost on the shores of Cape Canaveral. In 1570 and 1571, six smaller ships were driven ashore; one was destroyed by the Ais. A document of 1630 mentions Flemish prisoners on the Ais, evidently from a shipwreck. Three Dutch ships sunk near the Ais Inlet in 1626. Lyon, ‘More Light on the Indians of the Ays Coast’, pp. 7-8.

<sup>58</sup> Lyon, ‘More Light on the Indians of the Ays Coast’, p. 8.

<sup>59</sup> For a general overview of shipwrecks along Florida’s coast see: Robert Marx, *Shipwrecks in Florida Waters. A Billion Dollar Graveyard* (Chuluota, 1985).

Eventually, the Spanish made a breakthrough with the Ais cacique and the Native Americans subject to him because the cacique promised to provide provisions to the survivors from any Spanish ships and send them on to St. Augustine. During the early seventeenth century, the Ais also agreed to capture enemy survivors and report their presence to the governor. Nevertheless, their promise to the Spanish was tenuous at best. Despite efforts by Spaniards to proselytise and to forge political alliances, the Native Americans of central and south Florida shunned those attempts and retained their vital role and complex socio-religious systems, inter-regional relations, and independence.<sup>60</sup>

Native Americans south of St. Augustine undoubtedly understood the ramifications of a constant Spanish presence in their villages including the loss of land and as non-agrarian peoples and the loss of their traditional subsistence methods as well. A constant Spanish presence might also alter the power structures among the peoples of southeast Florida. Therefore, it stands to reason that the Ais and their subsidiaries limited their contact with Spaniards to occasions that provided immediate benefits. This type of vacillating behaviour, especially in the face of military expeditions, kept the Spanish ‘perpetually puzzled and irritated’ with their Native American counterparts. While the Spanish characterized Native American actions as ‘treachery’, Lyon suggests that ‘all the Indians were doing was temporarily yielding ground when confronted by an immediate and present force, and then returning to their way when the threat was gone.’<sup>61</sup>

These interactions, however, led to changes in the socioeconomic and political organisation of the Native Americans along Florida’s southeast coast.<sup>62</sup> The Native

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<sup>60</sup> Hann, *Indians of Central and South Florida*, pp. xi-xii.

<sup>61</sup> Lyon, ‘More Light on the Indians of the Ays Coast’, p. 13.

<sup>62</sup> In the early colonial period, an increased European presence made life for Native Floridians more difficult. Introduced diseases and the colonial system reduced

Americans became increasingly connected not only to Spaniards but also with other Europeans and the African counterparts. Consequently, Native Americans began to consider the benefits of keeping castaways alive, particularly for ransom, while developing trade relations rather than killing Europeans they encountered. These groups continued to trade with Atlantic world interlopers as they came ashore for wood and water. Amy Bushnell suggests that the Ais traded with French corsairs for ambergris, a perfume fixative, and sassafras and china root, popular specifics for syphilis.<sup>63</sup> They also interacted with English and Dutch corsairs who lurked near the coast of Cape Canaveral looking to attack Spanish shipping lanes.<sup>64</sup> The Ais also witnessed, on several occasions, Europeans interacting with each other along their coasts as well. In 1627, a Dutch fleet drove a Spanish frigate aground near Cape Canaveral. They skirmished with the Spaniards, stripped the frigate of its contents, burned the frigate to the waterline, and anchored off the Ais village. In the end, the Dutch, with ‘gifts and cajolery’, successfully established relations with the Ais. When the Spanish arrived in the village to purge the Dutch, who had already retreated, they found six English and French pirates being held captive. Rojas y Borja suggested that they were being held until they could be brought to St. Augustine.<sup>65</sup> Their presence, however, seems strikingly similar to Dickinson’s captivity discussed below.

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populations, caused alterations of traditional political systems, and disrupted what had previously been adequate subsistence systems. Milanich, *The Invasion from Europe*, p. 33.

<sup>63</sup> Bushnell, *Situado and Sabana. Spain’s Support System for the Presidio and Mission Provinces of Florida* (Athens, 1994), p. 64; Bushnell, ‘Republic of Spaniards, Republic of Indians’, in Michael Gannon (ed), *The New History of Florida* (Gainesville, 1996), p. 68.

<sup>64</sup> Bushnell, *The King’s Coffin*, p. 8.

<sup>65</sup> Hann, *Indians of Central and South Florida*, p. 90.



To combat the problems posed by Northern Europeans trading with the natives of Florida's southern coast, the Spanish governor continued to pursue friendly relations with the Ais. Borja noted that 'on the occasions when English and Dutch ships have arrived on the coast of these Indians, they have not admitted them or traded with them. And they have come to give me news that there are enemy ships on the coast.'<sup>66</sup> The key here is the Native Americans' refusal to 'admit' or 'trade' with the English or the Dutch. The Spaniard says nothing about them being put to death, a treatment apparently reserved for his countrymen.<sup>67</sup> Nor could he really testify to how Native Americans treated other Europeans while the Spanish were not present. This omission suggests that the relations between Northern Europeans and the Native Americans along Florida's southeast coast were somewhat different to that of the Spanish. At the very least, Native Americans, especially the Ais, made clear distinctions between different groups of Europeans. Whether these distinctions were based on the national origins of the Europeans or on the immediate goals of the Native Americans is unknown. Therefore, when Dickinson and company were shipwrecked along Florida's southeastern coast in 1696, they entered into a complex web of resistance and cooperation between Europeans and Native Americans. In the end, Dickinson found that Native Americans were both very knowledgeable about different European nations and distinguished closely between them.

### **Problems with the Shipwreck**

Having unknowingly arrived in this complex web of interaction, the castaways attempted to consolidate the wreckage of the *Reformation* during the early morning hours of 23

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<sup>66</sup> Rojas y Boria quoted in Hann, *Indians of Central and South Florida*, pp. 89-90.

<sup>67</sup> For a discussion of the numerous executions of Spanish missionaries and military men see: Hann, *Indians of Central and South Florida*, pp.78-103 and Milanich, *Florida Indians and the Invasion from Europe*, pp. 99-163.

October 1696. Dickinson and London, one of Dickinson's ten enslaved Africans, were searching for some type of suitable shelter when:

About the Eighth or Ninth hour, came two Indian Men...from the Southward, running fiercely, and foaming at the Mouth, having no Weapons but their Knives, and forthwith, not making any stop, violently seized the two first Men they met with...they used no Violence, for the Men resisted not...Their Countenance was very Furious and Bloody...the rest of our Men followed from the Vessel, asking me what they should do, whether they should bet their guns to kill these two; but I perswaded them otherwise, desiring them to be quiet, shewing their inability to defend us from what would follow, but to put our Trust in the Lord, who was able to defend to the uttermost....whilst these two...stood with a wild furious Countenance, looking upon us; I thought with my self to give them some Tobacco and Pipes, which they greedily snatch'd from me, and making a snuffing Noise like a Wild-Beast, turned their backs upon us, and ran away.<sup>68</sup>

Post-storm reconnaissance missions were regular occurrences along Florida's east coast. Spanish prisoners reported that they often saw their captors head for the local beaches after a storm and return with 'great wealth, in bars of silver and gold, and bags of reals'.<sup>69</sup> Lyon suggests that Native Americans 'had made adaptations to a wrecking and salvage complex' and essentially became experts at the task.<sup>70</sup>

Once the two Native American scouts left the wet, weak, and lame castaways, Dickinson and company:

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<sup>68</sup> *God's Protecting Providence*, p. 5

<sup>69</sup> Escalante Fontaneda quoted in Axtell, *The Indians' New South*, p. 13.

<sup>70</sup> Lyon, 'More Light on the Indians of the Ays Coast', p. 14.

communed together, and considered our Condition, being among a barbarous People, such as were generally accounted Men-Eaters, believing those two were gone to Alarm their People: We sat our selves down, expecting Cruelty and hard Death, except it should please Almighty God to work wonderfully for our Deliverance. In this deep Concernment some of us were not left without Hopes; blessed be the Name of the Lord, in who we trusted As we were under a deep Exercise and Concernment, a Motion arose from one of us, that if we should put our selves under the Denomination of Spaniards (it being known that that Nation had some Influence on them) and one of us, named Salomon Cresson, speaking Spanish Language well, it was hope'd this might be a means for our Delivery; to which, the most of the Company assented.<sup>71</sup>

These two passages from Dickinson's journal are very revealing because they highlight several ideological strands that influenced the castaways' world-view and decision-making process.<sup>72</sup> First, for Dickinson, Robert Barrow, a Quaker missionary, and the editors of the first published edition of the journal, surviving this ordeal in Florida was a matter of putting faith in the Lord.<sup>73</sup> For an eighteenth-century Quaker audience,

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<sup>71</sup> *God's Protecting Providence*, pp. 5-6.

<sup>72</sup> Dickinson recorded the events of his time in Florida after his arrival in Philadelphia with prompting from the Society of Friends. Two manuscript copies, one previously undiscovered which I am preparing for publication, of the journal are located at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. The first published edition (1699) remains relatively true to the manuscript; however, some of the language was modified while other passages were excluded all together. Joseph Kirle confirmed the accuracy of Dickinson's account.

<sup>73</sup> Barrow was a well-traveled and oft-persecuted Quaker missionary. Barrow spent twenty-six years ministering throughout Wales, Scotland, and Ireland. Barrow was a close friend of George Fox and a highly regarded member of the London Quaker meeting. Barrow first arrived in Philadelphia in 1695. Barrow, accompanied by another Quaker missionary, Robert Wardell, traveled along the east coast of America and the Caribbean. By the fall of 1696, Wardell died and Barrow resided in Elizabeth Parish,

‘God’s protecting providence’ was the central theme of the journal.<sup>74</sup> To further illustrate the glory of God, God’s providence was actively juxtaposed with the harsh environment and the barbarous ‘devouring jaws of the inhuman canibals of Florida.’<sup>75</sup> The prefacer of the original journal, presumably Samuel Preston, suggested that the castaways were ‘so affected with such eminent appearances of the protecting hand of Providence, for their help, preservations, and deliverance that they are not willing to confine it to them only, but to publish to the world; that the fame of God may be spread from sea to sea.’<sup>76</sup>

Captivity narratives in general often included a theme of redemption by faith in the face of the threats and temptations of a foreign place and an alien way of life. Emphasising the harshness of the voyage was a standard practice for many deliverance narratives published during the seventeenth and eighteenth century. These stories present tales of families sundered, communities destroyed, and boarders shifting and vulnerable to attacks by native peoples and their European allies. Lorraine Carroll suggests that ‘much of the their force derives from the fear of an uncertainty attendant on the captive’s

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Jamaica with his fellow religionists. Discouraged by the conditions prevailing among the Friends in Jamaica, he left with Dickinson for Philadelphia. For a biographical sketch of Barrow see: Andrews and Andrews, *Jonathan Dickinson’s Journal*, pp. 118-24.

<sup>74</sup> *God’s Protecting Providence* was an eighteenth-century bestseller. Its value of a Quaker tract was instantly recognised. The title pages of the various reprints of the journal reveal the importance of God in the narrative. After the first edition in 1699, Dickinson and Barrow feature equally. With each new edition Barrow, a Quaker missionary suffering his last ordeal, becomes the real hero, Dickinson remains merely the author. Nevertheless Dickinson is the model of the emerging Quaker man of business, and his text alternates between the story of his competent actions and a hagiographic appreciation of Barrow, the elder, beloved missionary, whose death near the end of the narrative provokes a textual apotheosis. Lorraine Carroll, ‘Captivity Literature’, in Kevin J. Hayes (ed), *Oxford Handbook of Early American Literature* (Oxford, 2008), p. 155. In all, the journal appears in sixteen editions and in three different languages: English, Dutch, and German. For a discussion of the various editions see: Andrews and Andrews, *Jonathan Dickinson’s Journal*, pp. 163-96

<sup>75</sup> *God’s Protecting Providence*, title page.

<sup>76</sup> *God’s Protecting Providence*, preface.

position in hostile, little-known North American locales.’ She continues: ‘all captivity texts derive their narrative power from the image of the suffering captive. They emphasise individual experiences of privation, loss, injury, death, occasional escape, and redemption—both physical and spiritual.’<sup>77</sup> Many of these accounts reinforce pernicious, ethnographic images of natives as primitive, but some also (and simultaneously present images of sophisticated and effective native practices—in warfare, political negotiation, and spiritual exercises).<sup>78</sup> Dickinson’s journal achieves all of these literary elements.

In fact Dickinson’s journal is described in the *Cambridge History of English and American Literature* ‘in many respects [as] the best of all the captivity tracts.’<sup>79</sup> The popularity of Dickinson’s journal may have resulted from its fanciful setting. In general, the Puritan captivity account gave New England readers a sense of the landscape and native peoples that shaped their lives. The Dickinson Quaker narrative, on the other hand, offered the far more exotic local of southern Florida, a place far removed from the daily experiences of Philadelphian readers. Carroll suggests that *God’s Protecting Providence* portrays Dickinson as a ‘heroic, authoritative, and sensible captive, one who negotiates assuredly with his captors.’<sup>80</sup> In this way, Dickinson’s captivity narrative served the Society of Friends as it moved from radical sect to mainstream institution by illustrating how a Quaker, under duress, capably manages the problems associated with temporal life (Dickinson) while it also offered a model of Quaker piety and resignation in

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<sup>77</sup> Carroll, ‘Captivity Narratives’, p. 145.

<sup>78</sup> Carroll, ‘Captivity Narratives’, p. 144.

<sup>79</sup> ‘Colonial and Revolutionary Literature, Early National Literature, Part I, Travellers and Explorers, 1583-1763’, in A. W. Ward, A. R. Waller, W. P. Trent, J. Erskine, S. P. Sherman, C. Van Doren (eds), *The Cambridge History of English and American Literature*, (New York, 1907-21).

<sup>80</sup> Carroll, ‘Captivity Literature’, p. 155.

death (Barrow).<sup>81</sup> In addition, the narrative might be viewed as an example of the Society of Friends' purposeful creation of its own history.<sup>82</sup>

In reality, Dickinson's survival strategy required pragmatism rather than providence. At some point during his travels, Dickinson became aware of the Native Americans' 'love of tobacco'. His gift of tobacco to the Native American scouts suggests an attempt to cultivate a positive relationship with the two Native American scouts. Native Americans were familiar with this type of reciprocity based on their prior experiences with the Spanish who often "bribed" them to do their bidding. Prestige items salvaged from shipwrecks or gathered through trade had long become a part of their local economic system.<sup>83</sup>

Moreover, satiating the scouts with a gift provided time for the castaways to devise a plan for their survival. In the interim, the castaways decided to masquerade as Spaniards because they believed them to have 'some influence over them [Native Americans]'.<sup>84</sup> Their ruse, however, was hopelessly flawed. Only one castaway, Solomon Cresson, of the twenty-four castaways could speak Spanish beyond a few words.<sup>85</sup> Regardless, Dickinson and Kirle 'instructed' the crew and the enslaved Africans

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<sup>81</sup> Captivity texts appeared in many different forms and exhibit stunning breadth of purpose, functioning as conversion tales, proto-ethnographic text, compendiums of historical and geographic data, sermons, travelogues, commercial advertisements, political and religious propaganda, and accounts of current events. Carroll, 'Captivity Literature', p. 143.

<sup>82</sup> Carroll, 'Captivity Literature', pp. 155-56.

<sup>83</sup> Lyon, 'More Light on the Indians of the Ays Coast', pp. 8-9.

<sup>84</sup> *God's Protecting Providence*, p. 6.

<sup>85</sup> Cresson, of Huguenot descent, was born in Harlem, New Amsterdam in 1674. After his father's death he relocated to Curacao. Cresson maintained business connections with the mid-Atlantic, particularly in Philadelphia but through poor business deals arrived in Jamaica penniless and was obliged to ship as a common sailor on board the *Reformation* bound for Philadelphia. For a biographical sketch of Cresson's family see: Andrews and Andrews, *Jonathan Dickinson's Journal*, pp. 115-18.

in rudimentary Spanish grammar and instructed them how to interact with Native Americans. Dickinson, unaware of the complexities of the Native Americans' various relationships with the Spanish, figured they might fare better if the Native Americans believed them to be Spanish.<sup>86</sup> These two decisions, the gift of tobacco and pretending to be Spanish, illustrate that ideas about Europeans and Native Americans circulated well beyond the peninsula. Native Americans, however, interpreted the castaways' actions quite differently than the castaways intended. For the Jobé, the significance of the shipwreck waited in the wreckage. Dickinson in company simply provided another opportunity for the Jobé to gather riches and information that they might utilize in their interactions with their local Native American counterparts, as well as the Spanish.

The Anglo-Caribbean castaways' survival stratagem of donning Spanish identities was one of astounding assumptions. For the ruse to work, as Amy Bushnell suggests, none of the Native Americans could know enough Spanish to penetrate their clumsy disguise. Yet they must collectively know enough about Spanish reprisals to refrain from harming Spaniards and enough about Spanish rewards to render them assistance.<sup>87</sup> Little did the castaways know that Spanish authority did not necessarily reach into the lower reaches of the peninsula. Nor did they really know what would have happened to them if they revealed their true nationality. Ultimately, however, the castaways had few options. This stratagem, moreover, was contrary to English pride and to Quaker principles. Perhaps, in the mind of the castaways, nothing but the fear of Spanish retaliation or the

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<sup>86</sup> *God's Protecting Providence*, p. 6.

<sup>87</sup> Bushnell, 'Escape of the Nickaleers: European-Indian Relations of the Wild Coast of Florida in 1696, from Jonathan Dickinson's Journal' in Brown (ed), *Coastal Encounters*, pp. 35-36.

expectation of ransom would keep the ‘savage men’ at bay.<sup>88</sup> This first encounter, however, provided the castaways with little cause to think that pretending to be Spanish would preserve their lives.

Evidently, the Jobé decided to spare the castaways’ lives on their own accord rather than because of the castaways’ successful ruse. Just like Spanish authority, the influence of Englishmen pretending to be Spanish did not garner much respect from the Jobé. The circumstances of Dickinson’s survival directly related to Native American perceptions of their changing world and an extraordinarily complex and multi-generational exchange that involved a multitude of local and trans-Atlantic influences. Native Americans used these ideas to inform their decisions when Europeans appeared on their shores.

When shipwrecks occurred along Florida’s east coast, the news of the castaways traveled fast. Within several hours the Jobé returned to the shipwreck in ‘very great number all running and shouting.’<sup>89</sup> While the majority of the approaching Jobé went to plunder the vessel, the ‘Cassekey with about thirty more came down’ on the Dickinson party in a ‘furious manner.’<sup>90</sup> Surrounding the castaways as they sat upon their salvaged trunks and chests, the Jobé cried, ‘Nickaleer, Nickaleer!’ At first the Dickinson party did not understand the exclamation but after a reference to ‘Espania’ the party supposed that at first the Indians meant English.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Bushnell, ‘Escape of the Nickaleers’, p. 35.

<sup>89</sup> *God’s Protecting Providence*, p. 6.

<sup>90</sup> *God’s Protecting Providence*, p. 6.

<sup>91</sup> The label haunted the castaways for their entire journey. Found only in this account, ‘Nickaleer’ seems to be Dickinson’s attempt to reproduce the Native American pronunciation of the Spanish *Inglaterra* or *Angleterre*. Bushnell, ‘Escape of the Nickaleers’, p. 244.



The Jobé, unsure of the castaways' nationality or their potential value as hostages, surrounded the survivors with 'their knives in their hands ready to execute their bloody design.' The cacique stood behind Dickinson while others were 'taking hold of some...by the heads with their knees set against [their] shoulders.' Bewilderment and fear grew as the castaways listened to the Jobé: 'they were in high words, which we understood not.'<sup>92</sup> After a brief discussion, the Jobé decided to spare the survivors in order to receive the goods locked in the trucks, chests, and scattered about the beach. Lyon suggests that the 'importance of salvaging can be inferred from the uses to which they put the goods recovered, and the evident relative value to which they place upon them'.<sup>93</sup> The Jobé stripped most of the party of their personal possessions and continued pillaging the shipwreck 'casting forth what ever they could lay hold on, except rum, sugar, molossoes, beef, and pork.'<sup>94</sup> Evidently, the Jobé ascribed very little value to perishable items or as Milanich suggests 'perhaps the rum, sugar, and molasses were valued commodities to which another chief whose military might the Hobe feared had a standing claim.'<sup>95</sup> Nevertheless, Dickinson seemed impressed with Jobé efficiency and skill in salvaging the *Reformation*.

Without a real sense of the discourse of the Native Americans' 'high words' it is difficult to speculate about their debate. The castaways' clumsy disguise might have put just enough doubt in the minds of the Jobé but the apparent shift from 'bloody-minded creature[s]' to indifferent salvagers, however, probably resulted from a well-argued

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<sup>92</sup> *God's Protecting Providence*, pp. 5-7

<sup>93</sup> Lyon, 'More Light on the Indians of the Ays Coast', p. 9.

<sup>94</sup> *God's Protecting Providence*, p. 6.

<sup>95</sup> Milanich, *Florida Indians and the Invasion from Europe*, p. 58.

discussion regarding the costs and benefits of captivity or execution.<sup>96</sup> The particulars of the debate will never be known, but two things are certain. First, Native Americans along Florida's east coast made real distinctions between different Europeans because of prior experiences with different groups. The three autonomous native groups, the Ais, the Santaluces, and the Jobé, repeatedly inquired about the castaways' national origins even though they could probably recognise the physical, cultural, and linguistic differences between the Spanish and the English.<sup>97</sup> Why they were insistent on confirming their identity, however, varied according to each tribe's proximity to St. Augustine and their relationship with the Spanish. Second, these distinct opinions about different Europeans and distinguishing between them were necessary in deciding how they treated the castaways.

Despite a growing awareness of a larger Atlantic world, the Jobé cacique's most immediate concern was with the dominant Native American group along Florida's southeast coast, the Ais. Yet, they also had to consider the Spanish. If Dickinson and company were Spanish, as they suggested, a recovery expedition would be expected to follow when the anticipated ship did not arrive in St. Augustine. If they were English and traveled south the castaways would go unnoticed by the Spanish at St. Augustine and, more importantly, by the Ais, who would otherwise demand tribute from the shipwreck. When Dickinson expressed his desire to move north, the cacique insisted they travel south to his 'town.' Dickinson suggests that the cacique wanted them to 'go to the southward for Havana, and that it was but a little way.'<sup>98</sup> Dickinson 'press[ed] him more

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<sup>96</sup> *God's Protecting Providence*, p. 7.

<sup>97</sup> At one point Dickinson heard a Jobé man call one of the castaways an 'English Son of a Bitch.' Andrews and Andrews, *Jonathan Dickinson's Journal*, p. 37.

<sup>98</sup> *God's Protecting Providence*, p. 8.

urgently, to let [them] go to St. a Lucea' but the cacique warned that they would have their 'throats and scalps cut and be shot, burn'd, and eaten.'<sup>99</sup> The cacique foretold this dramatic prediction, as Dickinson rightly perceived, as a diversion to make going south appear more attractive. The cacique's main concern was securing the plunder from the shipwreck and by sending the castaways south the plunder would be safe against other inquiries. In the end, as Dickinson's suggested, the Jobé cacique 'had heard of these places [Havana, Santa Lucía, and St. Augustine] and knew which way they lay.'<sup>100</sup> During this early exchange, the Jobé cacique illustrated a keen awareness of his local milieu as well as his place within the larger Atlantic world.

After three days at the Jobé village, the cacique permitted the castaways to go north toward St. Augustine; however, he delayed their departure until he secured his plunder, particularly the 1,500 pieces of eight. The cacique and three of Dickinson's enslaved Africans headed northward while the village was 'busie with what they had taken out of [the] vessel...sewing some cloth together, stringing our beds, mending locks and chests.'<sup>101</sup> When the cacique returned with the boat, the three enslaved African porters related that 'the chief business was to remove the money from one place to another and bury it.'<sup>102</sup>

The cacique's choice to use Dickinson's enslaved Africans as porters are intriguing. Dickinson supposed that the cacique did not trust his own people. The cacique may have simply viewed the enslaved Africans as more able-bodied laborers and

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<sup>99</sup> The fort named Santa Lucia, established by the garrison left by Pedro Menendez at the Ais Inlet in 1565 after they removed to the south, was incessantly attacked by Native Americans and tormented by improper supply was abandoned more than one hundred years before Dickinson arrived in Florida.

<sup>100</sup> *God's Protecting Providence*, p. 7.

<sup>101</sup> *God's Protecting Providence*, p. 14.

<sup>102</sup> *God's Protecting Providence*, p. 15.

probably understood the relationship between enslaved Africans and their Europeans. Either way, it is clear that the Jobé cacique made a distinction between his white captive and his black captives.

The Jobé mended locks and hid plunder not because he did not trust his own people but because he aimed to keep it from his Native American counterparts, and perhaps the Spanish, whom Dickinson encountered on his travels northward.<sup>103</sup> Burning the *Reformation* to the waterline, which the Jobé did after first contact, further concealed the size of the prize.<sup>104</sup> The Jobé cacique's preparations were all justified because once Dickinson and company related what they lost to the Ais, and later to the Spanish, they both sent recovery expeditions for the lost goods.

Maltreatment, abuse, and a general air of hostility characterised the first encounters of the castaways with both the Jobé and the Santaluces; however upon reaching their respective villages the Native Americans treated the castaway much more kindly. Despite this obvious complication, most historians who have commented on Dickinson's journal argue that the Native Americans in Florida treated the castaways particularly poorly because they were English. Physical abuse and stripping the castaways of their personal property characterise the worst of the maltreatment. Therefore, historians have difficulty explaining or supporting with evidence why the Native Americans would treat the English so poorly. Amy Turner Bushnell suggests that 'the wild coast Indians...had good reason to hate the English, for they know them as man-

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<sup>103</sup> Evidently, the Jobé understood the value of precious metals and money to the Spanish, for the Spanish had made this value quite clear in the course of many contact. Lyon, 'More Light on the Indians of the Ays Coast', p. 10.

<sup>104</sup> Lyon suggests that 'the Indians burned the wreck, possibly to obtain the metal fittings for use'. Lyon, 'More Light on the Indians of the Ays Coast', p. 9.

stealers.’<sup>105</sup> Charles Andrews argues that their antipathy towards the English resulted from their knowledge of the longstanding hostility between the Spanish and the English and their ‘familiarity with such a situation...could have become an established conviction with the Indians.’<sup>106</sup> The author of the preface to the original edition of the journal was less certain: ‘whether their cruelty against the English proceeds from their being under no apprehension of danger from them...or whether it proceeds from any particular disgust offered them by some English I shall not determine.’<sup>107</sup> In short, these historians argue that the poor treatment of the castaways resulted from a long history of enslavement and maltreatment on the part of the English, an awareness of European political maneuvers, or an apparent lack of threat posed by English castaways. Ultimately, the commentators focused on the English and not on the true European presence in Florida, the Spanish.

I contend that the Native Americans did not treat the English poorly at all. In fact, the castaways simply experienced a complex expression of a standard protocol developed by Native American after dealing with decades of shipwrecks. Events such as these, while devastating the Dickinson party, were regular occurrences along the east coast of Florida.<sup>108</sup> Consequently, Native Americans developed a series of actions to deal with stranded Europeans. The Native Americans first cowed castaways into submission regardless of national origin. Second, they analysed the costs and benefits for keeping the

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<sup>105</sup> Bushnell, ‘Escape of the Nickaleers’, p. 58.

<sup>106</sup> Andrews, *Jonathan Dickinson’s Journal*, pp. 156-7.

<sup>107</sup> *God’s Protecting Providence*, preface.

<sup>108</sup> In August 1682 Sir Thomas Lynch wrote to the Governor of New Providence about his position in the Bahamas: ‘it is known that your Islands are peopled by men who are intent rather on pillaging Spanish wrecks than planting, that they carry on their work by Indians kidnapped or entrapped on the coast of Florida, and that all the violence you complain of arises only from disputes about these wrecks.’ J.W. Fortesque (ed), *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series, America and the West Indies, 1681-1685* (London, 1898), pp. 286-88.

castaways alive. Third, and most importantly, they secured whatever plunder they could from the shipwrecked vessel. After establishing the status quo, Native Americans decided the fate of castaways.

The aforementioned suppositions from previous historical interpretations of Dickinson's journal about Anglo-Native American interactions are not particularly well founded. First, the idea that the English maintained a reputation amongst the Native American groups of south Florida to be slavers seems to be unlikely for three reasons: timing, location, and duration. Bushnell argues that 'the English treated the wild coast like a labor pool, seizing the natives at will and taking them to distant places where they were forced to labor under dangerous conditions where few would survive.'<sup>109</sup> Bushnell highlights several occasions when the English took native captives including Robert Searles' sack of St. Augustine in 1668 when he took a number of captives black, white, and Native American; a buccaneering occupation of Apalache on the Gulf in 1682; and William Phips' salvage expedition of the *Nuestra Señora de la Concepcion* in 1687 when Native American divers worked on the site. The lynchpin of the argument, however, is Dickinson's relation of a Native American captive who had been taken by an English merchantman and subsequently made his way back to the Ais village via Havana.<sup>110</sup> Bushnell also suggests that English slave raids from South Carolina during Queen Anne's War might have generated this reputation as well.

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<sup>109</sup> Bushnell, 'Escape of the Nickaleers', p. 56.

<sup>110</sup> At Jece Dickinson describes a 'man in this town who, some years past, had been taken off by some of our English sloops, for a diver on the wreck to the eastward of Cuba, where he was sometime: but the vessel putting into Cuba, for water, this Indian swam on shore and got to Havana, thence to St. Augustine, and so to his native town. The greatest charge this man had against the English was for taking him and their people away, not that he was well used amongst them. This Indian would often call Joseph Kirle, Solomon Cresson, and some of us into his house, seeming very cheerful, asking if were would eat'. *God's Protecting Providence*, p. 41-42.

On the contrary, Native Americans may have viewed Robert Searle's raid of St. Augustine as an attack on the Spanish, not as a direct affront to Native American villages some 250 miles south of the Spanish settlement. Searle's interests focused on weakening the Spanish garrison more than taking Native American captives. The occupation of the gulf coast community during 1688 was even more far removed from life along Florida southeast coast. The recovery expedition of William Phips might be viewed as a direct threat to Native American autonomy but it is important to remember that the Ais received certain benefits for their service as wreck divers. Finally, while Creek and Yamasee raids did occur in Spanish Florida prior to the beginning of the War of Spanish Succession, none of those raids took place south of Saint Augustine until after 1701, nearly four years after Dickinson and company departed Florida.<sup>111</sup> Alan Gallay, the chief scholar of the Indian slave trade in the south, only mentions in passing that English sponsored slave raids occurred south of Timucuan territory at all.<sup>112</sup> Furthermore, the English were not the enslavers themselves, only the middlemen between the raiders and the marketplace.<sup>113</sup>

Andrews suggests that Native American antipathy towards the English resulted from their knowledge of the longstanding hostility between the Spanish and the English. While Native Americans along the Florida southeast coast were certainly aware that the Spanish did not enjoy the English presence on the peninsula, the Native Americans also realised the impermanence of the English settlement in the region. The Ais had first-hand knowledge of English settlement in the Caribbean; whether or not the Jobé were

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<sup>111</sup> See Dickinson's description of the cacique's reaction to the arrival of the Spaniards.

<sup>112</sup> Gallay, *The Indian Slave Trade*, p. 148.

<sup>113</sup> Gallay, *The Indian Slave Trade*, p. 69

aware of an English presence in the Caribbean or South Carolina is uncertain.<sup>114</sup> The arrival of English corsairs and merchantmen along the southern coast may have been viewed as an opportunity for trade, evident from a number of English goods at Jece. Dickinson suggests that ‘we saw many tokens of some of our nations...two English canoes, one of cedar the other of cotton tree like those of Jamaica, several blocks and sheaves of *lignum-vitae*; several tools and knives, and more particularly, a razor, on the haft...Thomas Foster. Some of these things look as though they have been several years amongst them, some but a few.’<sup>115</sup> The presence of English corsairs and traders may have also been viewed as a welcome distraction for the Spanish.

In any event, the idea that Native Americans directly adhered to Spanish perceptions of the English does not clearly represent their evolving perspectives regarding different Europeans. Native Americans wanted simply to adapt and adopt what they found desirable and attractive from the Europeans. Gallay argues that Native Americans had ‘no intention of accepting the Europeans model for new behaviour, or of exchanging their culture for a new one, or, not least, of accepting European dominance over them’.<sup>116</sup> Native Americans along Florida’s southeast coast were autonomous and made decisions based around their immediate goals. In the end, Andrews’ supposition paints the Native Americans along Florida’s southeast coast as subject to Spanish authority. Spanish influence among the Native Americans must not be misinterpreted as apathy for, or adherence to, European initiatives.

Finally, the prefacer of the original journal, Samuel Preston, suggests that the English did not present a threat to the Native Americans and that their helplessness

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<sup>114</sup> *God’s Protecting Providence*, pp. 41-2

<sup>115</sup> *God’s Protecting Providence*, p. 41.

<sup>116</sup> Gallay, *The Indian Slave Trade*, p. 125.



created an occasion for maltreatment. This would probably be the case for any half-drowned and half-starved castaway regardless of national origin. In all of these arguments, these authors highlight the impact of European actions and their repercussions. If we consider the 150-year relationship with the Spanish, during which time Native Americans executed many Spanish soldiers, missionaries, and castaways, it appears that the Dickinson party received particularly good treatment.<sup>117</sup> The violence and the death threats, while real to the castaways, simply illustrate an elaborate scheme aimed at defining the power dynamics between captives and captors. More than likely, none of the native groups Dickinson encountered intended on killing the castaways. The castaways' view of the Jobé, and all the Native Americans they encountered, as bloodthirsty pagan cannibals was an image created in their own minds a result of the growing literature and prejudices about Native Americans that circulated around Europe and the Atlantic colonies.

During these complex exchanges, Native American balanced their acts of ferocity with acts of kindness. Dickinson, as the author, glossed over the kindness of Native Americans in the published account in order to highlight his dire circumstances and the glory of God's deliverance.<sup>118</sup> After the initial encounter, the Jobé cacique stayed with Dickinson while the 'some hundreds' of Jobé pillagers continued to salvage goods from the wreck. Contrary to the image of a 'blood thirsty savage' at first encounter, now the 'Cassekey's heart was tendered toward us...and for the remaining part of the day [to]

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<sup>117</sup> From first contact to the eve of Dickinson's arrival in Florida, the Native Americans and the Spanish had a contentious relationship. Milanich outlines a number of cases when Native Americans along Florida's east coast executed Spanish soldiers and missionaries in *Florida Indians and the Invasion from Europe*, pp. 99-164.

<sup>118</sup> Dickinson's language in the unpublished manuscript version of the journal is much more forgiving in regards to the positive treatment his and the other castaways received from their Native American captors.

keep off the petty-robbers.’<sup>119</sup> When the rain started again the cacique signaled that they should build a shelter in which he ‘stayed with them and the trunks he reserved for himself.’<sup>120</sup> He also retrieved several coats for those in the tent. Late in the evening a group of Indians brought a slaughtered hog to the tent for the castaways to eat. Upon their arrival to the Jobé village, the cacique offered them water and constructed a makeshift shelter connected to his wigwam ‘of some sticks...with small palmetto tyed and flattened to the stakes; he also provided three reed mats.’<sup>121</sup> The ‘Cassekey’s wife’ suckled Dickinson’s infant child. Another Jobé Indian ‘brought a fish boiled on a palmetto leaf and sat it down amongst us.’ This was hardly the treatment one might expect of a ‘barbarous’ people’ preparing for a mass execution.<sup>122</sup>

The following morning the cacique’s hospitality continued with his son gathering, ‘in two hours...as many fish as would serve twenty men.’<sup>123</sup> Some of the Native Americans took kindly to particular castaways, as Dickinson wrote, ‘Solomon Cresson was mightily in one Indian’s favor, who would hardly stir from his wigwam, but Solomon must be with him, and go arm in arm, which Indian amongst his plunder had a morning gown, which he put on Solomon.’<sup>124</sup> Others took to Christianity, or rather to the reading of the Bible:

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<sup>119</sup> *God’s Protecting Providence*, p. 8.

<sup>120</sup> *God’s Protecting Providence*, p. 8.

<sup>121</sup> *God’s Protecting Providence*, p. 12.

<sup>122</sup> Milanich comments on Dickinson’s first night at the Jobé village in a curiously euro-centric manner. Milanich suggests that ‘while at the Hobe village, Dickinson witnessed a native ceremony, that from the viewpoint of a cold, hungry shipwreck survivor who thought he might be killed and eaten by his hosts at any minute, must have been a blood-curdling event.’ Milanich, *Florida and the Invasion from Europe*, p. 59.

<sup>123</sup> *God’s Protecting Providence*, p. 12.

<sup>124</sup> *God’s Protecting Providence*, p. 16.

some of them, especially, the Cacique's son, would take great delight in our reading, and would take the Bible or other book, and give to one or other to read; the sound of which pleased them, for they would sit quietly and very attentively to hear us.<sup>125</sup>

It is important to remember that the readings were all in English, not Spanish as they pretended to be. After three days at the Jobé village, Dickinson and company departed for St. Augustine. The cacique gave them several things including 'five or six pounds of butter, some sugar, a rundlet of wine, some balls of chocolate,' and a large bowl to bail water from the leaky boat.<sup>126</sup> The night before the cacique 'seem'd very generous to my wife and child' and gave her several useful things.<sup>127</sup> In exchange, however, the cacique was 'resolved on' keeping one of Dickinson's enslaved African boys, Cæsar.<sup>128</sup> Here again, the cacique was making clear distinctions between his white and black captives. Evidently, the cacique viewed the enslaved boy as part of his plunder and required him in exchange for the goods he gave back to Dickinson before his departure.

When the castaways arrived at Santa Lucéa, twenty miles up the coast, two Santalucean fishermen observed the castaways from across the inlet and quickly headed for their village. Within the hour a large group of Santaluces arrived at the inlet with their bows and arrows. They 'came in the greatest rage that possible a barbarous people could.'<sup>129</sup> When coming upon the castaways, they cried 'Nickaleer, Nickaleer' while the

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<sup>125</sup> *God's Protecting Providence*, p. 15.

<sup>126</sup> A rundlet is roughly equivalent to fifteen gallons.

<sup>127</sup> *God's Protecting Providence*, pp. 15-6.

<sup>128</sup> *God's Protecting Providence*, p. 16.

<sup>129</sup> *God's Protecting Providence*, p. 21.

castaways ‘sat all still, expecting death.’ After the ‘Indians had taken all but their lives’ they ushered the castaways across the inlet.<sup>130</sup>

Map 2: Dickinson’s La Florida



Here again, the Santaluces balanced their initial act of ferocity with acts of kindness. While some were for ‘prosecut[ing] their bloody design’ others interceded on

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<sup>130</sup> *God’s Protecting Providence*, p. 22.

the castaways' behalf.<sup>131</sup> The castaways 'felt the rage of some of them' as they continued to throw rocks, shoot arrows, and strike them as they made their way to the village. Conversely, some of the captors protected the castaways. A Santalucean woman gave Mary Dickinson a pair of breeches. When an overzealous captor forced a handful of sand in baby Jonathan's mouth the cacique's wife came to their aid and stayed with them until they reached the cacique's house. Thus, as Dickinson suggests 'a mighty strife there was amongst them; some would kill us, others would prevent it: and thus one Indian was striving with another.'<sup>132</sup> This ritualised gauntlet meant to serve as an intimidation technique used to cow the castaways into submission much like the Jobé. In retrospect, massacring the captives seems like a fairly implausible objective.

While at the council house, the Santaluces gave Mary Dickinson and the enslaved African women deerskins to cover their cold and broken bodies; the men received breechcloths of woven grass. The Santaluces appointed a place for the castaways and provided mats to lie down; however, the place was "extremely nasty...[and] swarmed with abundance of many sorts of creeping things."<sup>133</sup> The Santaluces debated while the castaway listened apprehensively. The cacique attempted to talk with Solomon but to no avail. The Native Americans went about brewing and drinking 'Cassenna' and smoking tobacco.<sup>134</sup> Around noon the Santaluces brought the castaways some boiled fish. The

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<sup>131</sup> *God's Protecting Providence*, p. 22.

<sup>132</sup> *God's Protecting Providence*, p. 23.

<sup>133</sup> *God's Protecting Providence*, p. 24.

<sup>134</sup> Black drink is made from the parched leaves of the yaupon plant (*Ilex vomitoria*), which grows wild along the Florida coasts north of the more tropical regions. It was used as a ceremonial tea by a large number of southeastern American Indians, including nearly all the groups in northern Florida. John Hann suggests that 'despite south Florida's apparent lack of the yaupon holly, regular consumption of *cacina* appears to have occurred among the elite at least of the east coast. Milanich, *Florida Indians and*

day progressed with singing, dancing, and drinking ‘cassenna’. The following day the cacique ‘looking on us pleasantly,’ offered gifts to some of the castaways. Mary received roasted clams to share with the rest of the castaways, while a Santalucean woman suckled baby Jonathan to the point that he ‘began to be cheerful and have an appetite to food.’<sup>135</sup>

The Santaluces continued to inquire about the party’s national origins and Cresson continued to suggest that they were Spanish. The Santaluces, however, pointed to those with dark hair and suggested they were Spanish but those with light hair they were doubtful about. Whether or not the Santaluces believed the castaways to be Spanish, they decided to send them on to the next village. Dickinson suggested that they were ‘satisfied...that most of us were Spaniards.’ More than likely they were satisfied with what a visiting Jobé ambassador related about the plunder.<sup>136</sup>

When the castaways reached the Jece, the paramount Ais village, they endured quite a different welcome. The Ais, who maintained relatively regular contact with the Spanish, and had a longer, or at least better documented, history with St. Augustine, welcomed the castaways. At Jece they met the ‘commander of the northern part of this coast, an ancient man, his beard and hair gray.’<sup>137</sup> The Ais cacique embraced the Kirle and suggested that ‘those people, who had served us thus, in stripping us, were rouges, but we were his camerades or friends.’ The cacique promised to ‘carry us to Augusteen’

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*the Invasion from Europe*, p. 59; Hann, *Indians of Central and South Florida*, p. 72; Charles Hudson, *The Black Drink. A Native American Tea* (Athens, 1979).

<sup>135</sup> *God’s Protecting Providence*, p. 26.

<sup>136</sup> In the manuscript version, Dickinson notes that ‘about tenn a clock came a stranger & Indians from another Towne upon ye news of this persons conveying yee Casseekey & all his Grandees’. Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Loudon Papers, Jonathan Dickinson, ‘Journal of the Travels of severall persons their sufferings being cast away in the gulf among the Cannabals of Florida’, p. 36.

<sup>137</sup> *God’s Protecting Providence*, p. 29

in few days.<sup>138</sup> Dickinson suggested that ‘the old “Cassekey”” seemed to have compassion for us.’<sup>139</sup>

In contrast to their arrival at Jobé and Santa Lucéa, the cacique immediately welcomed the castaways into the village without the expected gauntlet of abuse. A performance of ferocity was apparently not needed to ensure the castaways’ good behavior. The Ais escorts brought the castaways to the council house where the cacique washed Robert Barrow and Mary Dickinson’s feet. The Ais distributed some canvas and ginger bags to the castaways to be used as clothing. They also offered Mary a piece of linen to cover baby Jonathan as well as a substantial amount of foodstuffs. Joseph Kirle received a coat. An Indian woman came ‘laden with baskets of berries’ for them to eat and another brought in a parcel of large ‘drums.’

At Jece, the castaways met another vessel’s company that was shipwrecked the same night as was the *Reformation*. Their company was comprised of six Englishmen and a woman.<sup>140</sup> When they came to the inlet south of Jece they turned back to retrieve their boat. Shortly thereafter several Ais, clearly aware of different Europeans, came down upon them asking ‘what nation they were, if Spaniards, English, or French?’<sup>141</sup> The castaways answered that they were Spanish but when the Indians looked angry they soon confessed to their English origins. The Ais scouts stripped the castaways and forced them to walk northward toward the town. Here again upon their entrance in the village the cacique gave them some clothing. Moreover, as Dickinson relates, ‘no violence [was]

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<sup>138</sup> *God’s Protecting Providence*, pp. 29-30.

<sup>139</sup> *God’s Protecting Providence*, p. 29.

<sup>140</sup> The passengers of the *Nantwich* included: John Smith, (Master) Andrew Murray, (Merchant) Andrew Barnes, (Mate) Hugh Allen, John Oster, John Shares (boy), Cornelius Toker (boy), and a women Passenger, named Penelope.

<sup>141</sup> *God’s Protecting Providence*, p. 31.

offered to their persons.’<sup>142</sup> The ‘*Nantwich* castaways’ received plenty of fish and berries to the time of Dickinson arrival. The Ais lodged the captain in the cacique’s ‘house’ while the others were lodged in the other ‘Indian-houses.’ When Dickinson and company arrived at the Ais village, the cacique suggested that the *Nantwich* castaways vacate the ‘Indian houses;’ they refused and were not forced out. Both parties received a variety of berries and a large parcel of fish. Neither party received death threats from the Ais. Even in the middle of a violent storm that flooded the village, the Ais provided berries for the castaways. Mary repeatedly ‘went a-begging’ to the Indian women to suckle baby Jonathan; ‘they seldom denied her’. Several days after the storm the castaways received the ‘greatest plenty’ of fish they received since arriving in Florida. In general, the Ais treated the castaways with kindness or, at worst, with apathy.

Bitter infighting, however, threatened to tear the castaways apart. In the manuscript version of the journal (excised from the printed version), Dickinson relates how ‘there gr[e]w a division amongst us some or most of ye Marriners of our Vessell’. He suggested they:

in ye greatest joyletry [and] very prophane...would appear like anticks before ye Indians to make them laugh at their folly [and] at ye same time would bler terrible oaths with cursings [and] Damings which at any tyme yet either Barrow Kirll or myself would reprove them.

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<sup>142</sup> *God’s Protecting Providence*, p. 31.



Dickinson lamented that his ‘reproofs begot their dislike at length, perfect hatred’. So in times of need they refused to supply Dickinson, his wife, or Kirle with any provisions and ‘publicly declared yet if wee perished for want they would not help us’.<sup>143</sup>

In another incident recorded in the manuscript version of the journal but excised from the printed versions, Dickinson’s enslaved Africans utilized the uncertainty of the circumstances to their advantage. Dickinson recorded how his enslaved Africans ‘through fear of ye Indians and other ill councell’ would not ‘come nigh to help my wife to tend her child...Especially one Negroe woman named Sarrah’. Dickinson complained that she would ‘taunt, demendre, & abase not only my wife but any of us all to our faces’. Dickinson further suggested that having gained the cacique’s favor, Sarah ‘would vilify us and at times when food and watter was scarce [and] would bee our hinderance from having it from ye Indians which wee might have had it not have been for her’. Dickinson could not reconcile how she ‘would deny us to bee her master or mistress [and] laugh and deride us at ye same time all which would increase our troubles.’<sup>144</sup> Africans, at least in this instance, took advantage of the leveling effects of the being stranded among Native Americans.

Eventually tensions eased and Dickinson enquired if the crew of the *Nantwich* was to go to St. Augustine as well. The cacique refused to take them because they were ‘Nickaleer, no Camerade.’<sup>145</sup> Dickinson interpreted that statement to imply that the English were not friends of the Ais. The cacique intended for them to go southward. He did not suggest that they were to be put to death. More than likely the cacique was

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<sup>143</sup> Dickinson, ‘Journal of the Travels of severall persons their sufferings’, pp. 52-53.

<sup>144</sup> Dickinson, ‘Journal of the Travels of severall persons their sufferings’, p. 53.

<sup>145</sup> *God’s Protecting Providence*, p. 30.

unaware of the relatively new alliance between the Spanish and English.<sup>146</sup> Even so an alliance probably meant very little to the Ais cacique and it is plausible to suggest that when the cacique suggested that the English were ‘no camarade’ he was referring to the longstanding animosity between the English and the Spanish not to an animosity between the Ais and the English. Dickinson, like the historians who have examined his text to date, failed to consider the relative point of view of the Native Americans. This is further evidence of Native Americans’ acute awareness of the evolving Atlantic world.<sup>147</sup>

As stated earlier, sustained contact with the Spanish better informed the Ais about European protocol and the advantages and disadvantages associated with interacting with castaways and Spanish authorities. More experience meant a better understanding about Spanish recovery expeditions and the potential value of different European hostages.

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<sup>146</sup> Old animosities between the Spanish and English were briefly suspended, at least on paper, with the Treaty of Ryswick after King William’s War. Dickinson was fortunate in arriving in Florida during this time because the south became embroiled in conflict with the onset of the War of Spanish Succession in 1702.

<sup>147</sup> Stuart Schwartz suggests that first observers of another culture, the traveler to foreign lands, the historian, and the ethnographer all share the common problem of observing, understanding, and representing. In practical terms, the study of cultural encounters generated a variety of approaches. Some scholars view the practice of representation itself as the essential act. In this formulation, such portrayals of another culture are important for what they tell us about the observer rather than the observed. Many other historians and anthropologists are less willing to abandon a belief in the ability of the observer to portray, record, or analyze another culture and the actions of its members in a manner that allows us to cross barriers that separate cultures. Schwartz further suggests that ‘in such meetings across cultures, an “implicit ethnography” existed on both sides of the encounter.’ Members of each society held ideas of themselves and ‘others’ and the things that gave them identities: language, color, ethnicity, kinship, gender, and religion. The theme of cultural encounters raises some of the central questions in the field of history, literature, and anthropology: perceptions of self and others, epistemology, and the dynamic nature of cross-cultural contact. All these disciplines have been concerned with the way in which the process of perceiving others reveal self-perception, and for some how what one says about another culture is more interesting as self-projection than as a reliable description of the “other.” Schwartz (ed), *Implicit Understandings. Observing, Reporting and Reflecting on the Encounters Between Europeans and Other Peoples in the Early Modern Era* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 2-4.

Consequently, the Ais cacique probably wanted to send the English castaways south for two reasons: first and foremost, the English survivors would not generate any kind of compensation; second, the arrival of English castaways in St. Augustine would probably result in an unwanted visit from a Spanish recovery expedition. On the other hand, by delivering the ‘Spaniards’ to St. Augustine there might be a chance at some type of recompense. By sending the Englishmen southward the Spanish would remain unaware of the shipwreck and the plunder would remain in their hands.

Recovering the plunder from the wreck of the *Reformation* was the immediate goal of the Ais cacique. Shortly after the castaways’ arrival, the Ais cacique inquired about Dickinson’s losses. Dickinson related that the Indians at ‘Hoebay’ confiscated a great deal of clothing and money. Upon hearing this he ‘grew covetous and said, he would go and get some of it from them.’<sup>148</sup> The next morning the cacique with ten men and two canoes headed southward for ‘Hoebay.’ He promised that upon his return he would carry them to St. Augustine.

As stated earlier, the Jobé village represented the southern limit of Ais hegemony. Evidently the Jobé cacique hid the Spanish coin before Dickinson’s departure for good reason. Several days later, the Ais cacique returned triumphantly atop one of Dickinson’s chests. He also brought Cæsar along with him. The village received the cacique ‘with great homage.’<sup>149</sup> He gave an account of his adventure during which time ‘he would often mention Nickaleer which caused us [the castaways] much fear.’<sup>150</sup> The cacique continued to inquire about the castaways’ national origins. He showed them goods that he knew to be English while asking if they belonged to the castaways. This is further

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<sup>148</sup> *God’s Protecting Providence*, p. 32.

<sup>149</sup> *God’s Protecting Providence*, p. 36.

<sup>150</sup> *God’s Protecting Providence*, p. 36.

evidence of the Ais's awareness of their changing world. The Spanish coin, however, provided Dickinson with a meek defense but the cacique became wary of taking them to St. Augustine. Perhaps he concluded that the value of the plunder outweighed the worth of any Spanish reward and consequently he decided not take the party to St. Augustine and 'laid all our hopes in the dust.'<sup>151</sup>

Dickinson continued to lobby for his company's departure to St. Augustine eventually convincing the cacique to allow Solomon to go to St. Augustine. The 'old Cassekey,' Solomon Cresson, and six Native Americans in a canoe set out for St. Augustine with a small chest with 'nigh one hundred pieces of eight.'<sup>152</sup> Presumably, the cacique planned to bring enough gold to St. Augustine to prevent Spanish authorities from coming to his village to inspect the size of the plunder. The gift of gold is comparable to the gift of cassina herbs, smoking herbs, and moss pillows to the Santaluces from the Jobé ambassador. Dickinson unknowingly observed a complex network of hegemonic exchange. The word of the shipwrecks, however, was well ahead of the cacique.

Approximately two weeks after the cacique's departure for St. Augustine, eleven Spaniards and one Native American interpreter arrived at Jece and 'embraced us [Dickinson and company] very cheerfully.' The power dynamic changed with the arrival of the Spanish. Clearly Spaniards, even in small numbers, garnered some respect amongst the Ais. The 'old Cassekey...seemed much dejected.' He lost what he had taken from Jobé to the Spaniards and his hope of delivering Spaniards for a reward would not be realised. The Native Americans along the southern coast gambled and lost.

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<sup>151</sup> *God's Protecting Providence*, p. 36.

<sup>152</sup> *God's Protecting Providence*, p. 37.

Dickinson's relation of the events, however, indicated that the normal method of recovering salvaged goods from the Native Americans along Florida's southeast coast was barter and trade rather than dominance. Bushnell contends that Native Americans had:

many things that Spaniards wanted: sassafras, amber, deer and buffalo skins, nut oil, bear grease, tobacco, canoes, storage containers, and, most of all food...and the Indians...wanted what the Spanish had: weapons, construction and cultivation tools, nails, cloth, blankets, bells, glass beads, church ornaments, and rum.<sup>153</sup>

Dickinson suggested that the Spanish attempted to persuade the Native Americans to 'bring [goods] to light' by offering to buy things with tobacco.<sup>154</sup> A leaf or half leaf of tobacco would purchase a year of linen or wollen, or silk from the Indians. Dickinson noted that the Ais had stores of silk, linen and wollen cloth, which they drolled to the Spaniards by the yard.<sup>155</sup> Five pounds of ambergris could buy, at St Augustine, a looking glass, an ax, a knife or two, and three or four mannocoes (five or six pounds) of tobacco.<sup>156</sup> By the time Dickinson arrived, Native Americans had learned that they could salvage goods from shipwrecks to manipulate their trade relationships with Europeans, particularly the Spanish.

In line with all those who encountered the castaways, the Spanish captain inquired as to where Dickinson and company were shipwrecked and made it known to them that he intended to go there to retrieve what the Jobé kept from the vessel. The castaways implored him not to go there because they feared for their lives in the absence of the

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<sup>153</sup> Bushnell, *The King's Coffe*, p. 8.

<sup>154</sup> *God's Protecting Providence*, p. 44; Bushnell, 'Escape of the Nickaleers', pp. 46-7.

<sup>155</sup> Bushnell, *The King's Coffe*, p. 96.

<sup>156</sup> Bushnell, *The King's Coffe*, p. 93.

Spanish. The castaways thought they could rest easier in the care of the Spanish. Ironically, with the arrival of the Spaniards the castaways' plight became harder as they quickly began the journey north to St. Augustine. The Spanish captain forced the castaways to proceed in two parties always making Kirle and the Ais guides go ahead. The two groups met at a place where they were to 'hale our boats over land, being a quarter of a mile from sound to sound.'<sup>157</sup> At this place, the Spanish captain, with another reciprocal gesture, gave a Native American a 'leaf of tobacco, commanding him to go, with all speed, and bid his cacique, with all his able men, come and help' get the boats across the land.<sup>158</sup> By the time they arrived the job was completed; the Spanish captain gave the cacique 'a leaf of town of tobacco' for his trouble and the cacique reciprocated with a 'stately parcel of fish' which the soldiers shared with Mary Dickinson and Penelope.<sup>159</sup> The Spanish, however, did not share the fish with the remaining two-dozen castaways.

The actions of the Spanish distressed the castaways. Dickinson, however, appeared more comfortable with their new European counterparts even if they showed little regard for the plight of the castaways. As the weather turned cold, the Spanish constructed a shelter with mats, but would not 'let us meddle with them [the boats]' to get shelter from the wind.<sup>160</sup> Moreover, on the next day when the company came across an 'Indian plantation' full of 'pumpion vines' but the 'Spaniards were too quick for us, and got all before us.'" Furthermore when a *piragua*, sent to recover goods from the Native American further south, delivered some provisions; bread, corn, and strung beef, to the

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<sup>157</sup> *God's Protecting Providence*, p. 48.

<sup>158</sup> *God's Protecting Providence*, p. 48.

<sup>159</sup> *God's Protecting Providence*, p. 49; Bushnell, 'Escape of the Nickaleers', p. 49.

<sup>160</sup> *God's Protecting Providence*, p. 49.

company 'it was kept from us, except a piece of strung beef, the Captain of the Spaniards' gave to Mary Dickinson.<sup>161</sup> Finally, Dickinson and Kirle thought the leader of the Spanish expedition, Captain Sabastian Lopez, conspired against them when he 'drew up a writing' for them to sign placing them and their African slaves 'at the disposal of the Governor of Augustine.' Dickinson refused to sign the document. By this point the Spanish had carried the castaways safely within the Spanish domain. The Spanish abandoned the castaways to return southward to the shipwreck to recover what they could from the Native Americans. The Spanish escorted the English castaways because it was protocol under a recent treaty between the two countries. The treaty, however, did not erase years of national and religious animosities that erupted again several years later.

Once the Spanish returned south for the goods left at Jobé, the castaways remained in the hands of the Native Americans of Florida. These native groups, however, were different from those along the southeast coast. Spanish missionary efforts focused in North Florida in the seventeenth century amongst native groups who spoke dialects of the Timucua language. While not a single political unit, the Timucua encompassed a group of around thirty simple chiefdoms each comprised of two to ten villages.<sup>162</sup> The castaways interacted with the eastern Timucua who inhabited the coastal areas from Cape Canaveral to St. Augustine. The various Timucua speakers lived in different environmental zones. All of the groups practiced some agriculture but many relied heavily on hunting, fishing, and gathering. The key distinction between the

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<sup>161</sup> *God's Protecting Providence*, p. 50.

<sup>162</sup> The castaways interacted with the eastern Timucua who inhabited the coastal areas from Cape Canaveral to St. Augustine. The various Timucua speakers lived in different environmental zones. All of the groups practiced some agriculture but many relied heavily on hunting, fishing, and gathering. Milanich, *Laboring in the Fields of the Lord*, p. 45; Milanich, *Florida Indians and the Invasion from Europe*, pp. 80-1.

Timucua and the Native Americans of southeast Florida was their adherence to Spanish authority. The Spanish maintained this authority through the establishment of the missions and military outposts.<sup>163</sup>

The castaways continued north with one Spaniard and their Native American guides. At each village the Native Americans provided provisions for the castaways.<sup>164</sup> The further north they travelled, however, the Native Americans became less accommodating to the castaways. Perhaps for two reasons: one, they may have been more accustomed to maltreatment and tacitly resistant to the Spanish or they may have been, as Spanish allies, less accommodating to people who were not Spanish. At each sentinel outpost the Spanish expressed little concern for the castaways suggesting that they should continue on to the next sentinel's house. In fact several were left to die along the shore after the Spanish sentinels refused to accommodate them. Dickinson relates the day:

our people, black and white, made all speed, one not staying for another, that could not travel so fast, not but I, with my wife and child, Robert Barrow... Benjamin Allen, and my negro London, whom I kept to help carry my child keeping together; the rest of our company had left us, not expecting to see some of us again; especially Robert Barrow, my wife and child.<sup>165</sup>

For the remainder of the day, Dickinson remained a good distance behind the larger party only four of which he could see. Dickinson sent London to ask them to

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<sup>163</sup> Hann, *History of the Timucua Indians and Missions* (Gainesville, 1996); John Worth, *The Timucuan Chiefdoms of Spanish Florida, Assimilation* (Gainesville, 1998); Worth, *The Timucuan Chiefdoms of Spanish Florida, Resistance and Destruction* (Gainesville, 1998).

<sup>164</sup> *God's Protecting Providence*, p. 52.

<sup>165</sup> *God's Protecting Providence*, p. 55.



slacken their pace; they did not. Later the evening ‘in the midst of these reasonings and doubtings’ Dickinson and company saw a Spaniard on top of the sand bank. They made their way to the sentinel’s house where the Spaniard offered them room by the fire, plenty of hot cassina, cornbread, and a ‘kersey-coat’ for Mary. The Spaniard refused, however, to go back for the others; he argued, ‘the weather was not fit to go out.’ Dickinson ‘begged of them hard’ to let them stay for the night but several of the castaways had to sleep in a small thicket of trees during the ‘hard frosty night’.<sup>166</sup> In the end, five of the castaways died of exposure that day: Benjamin Allen, Jack, Ceasar, Quensa, and baby Cajoe. The Spaniards not being able to maintain the castaways continued to send them further north as quickly as they came to each house.

Eventually another boat from St. Augustine came to fetch the castaways. The Spanish escorted the Dickinsons directly to the governor’s house. Had Dickinson been more aware of protocol, he might have noticed where the governor received him—not at the landing, as an honored guest, nor at the entrance to the Government House as an equal, but rather standing formally at the top of the stairs.<sup>167</sup> Once he established his space and exerted dominance over Dickinson, don Laureno de Toress y Ayala was gracious.<sup>168</sup> The governor’s treatment of the Dickinsons was strangely similar to that they received from the various Native American caciques along their way. They received wine, food, and clothing. They were quartered in the governor’s house. While the hard part of the ordeal was over, the 500-mile journey was just halfway completed. Another

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<sup>166</sup> *God’s Protecting Providence*, p. 59.

<sup>167</sup> Dell Upton suggests that this was a characteristic early modern way of illustrating superiority to an inferior. (Dell Upton, ‘White and Black Landscapes of Eighteenth-Century Virginia’, *Places* 2:2 (1985), pp. 59-72.

<sup>168</sup> In a long list of Spanish Florida’s royal governor, he was the first American appointee: a creole from Cuba rather than a peninsular from Spain. Bushnell, ‘Escape of the Nickaleers’, p. 53.

250 miles of Native American territory separated Spanish Saint Augustine and English Charlestown. During this journey, only briefly recorded in Dickinson's journal, Dickinson entered into an even more hotly contested zone between several Native American tribes, the English, and the Spanish.<sup>169</sup>

To prepare for the second leg of the trip, Kirle and Dickinson intended on selling several enslaved Africans to buy clothes and provisions. The governor, however, refused to allow such sales and instead extended the castaways credit to be paid back by the governor of Charlestown. Dickinson procured a 'quantity of Indian corn, peas, stringed beef, salt and earthen pots...seven blankets [at a great price]...five roves of ammunition, and bread...totaling four hundred pieces of eight.'<sup>170</sup> In exchange, 'we should forget him when we got amongst our nation, and also added that if we forget, God would not forget him...because what ever he did he did for charity's sake.'<sup>171</sup>

The journey from St. Augustine to Charlestown took just under a month during which time Dickinson and company called at various Indian towns along the way: Santa Cruce, St. Wans, St. Mary's, St. Philips, Sappataw, St. Catalena, and various other unnamed villages. In Spanish territory, these 'Indian towns' were mission or garrison towns that served as a buffer between the typically contentious settlements of St. Augustine and Charlestown.<sup>172</sup> Dickinson's journey illustrated a different view of these settlements from his view of those in Southeast Florida: 'they have a friar and a worshipping house, the people are very industrious, having plenty of hogs and fowls, and

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<sup>169</sup> See Gallay, *The Indians Slave Trade*; Steven Oatis, *A Colonial Complex. South Carolina's Frontiers in the Ear of the Yamasee War, 1680-1730* (Lincoln, 2004).

<sup>170</sup> *God's Protecting Providence*, pp. 69-71.

<sup>171</sup> *God's Protecting Providence*, p. 70.

<sup>172</sup> See Milanich, *Laboring in the Fields of the Lord*; Worth, *The Struggle for the Georgia Coast. An Eighteenth-Century Spanish Retrospective of Guale and Mocama* (New York, 1995).

large crops of corn.’<sup>173</sup> In typical European style, Dickinson praised their more settled ways of life. These groups often brought in victuals and supplies for the large canoe-going convoy.

Beyond the mission towns, Native Americans affiliated with the Spanish typically treated Dickinson and company well but the Yamasee Indians of Carolina were suspicious of the party. Perhaps more sustained contacts with the English in South Carolina created an air of suspicion surrounding Spanish and their Native American allies. One of the Native American guides, a cacique from St. Wans was related to the Yamasee and when they met the Spanish captain encouraged Dickinson to write the governor of Carolina, which the Yamasee carried north for them. Along their travels they happened across several merchants from Carolina, with four Indian slaves and laden with skins. Three of the Yamasee fled to the woods ‘fearing the Spanish.’<sup>174</sup>

Dickinson’s time along Georgia and South Carolina occurred on the eve of the most destructive period of the early colonial history of the American Southeast. Within a decade the English and Spanish would be once again engaged in a life and death struggle for control over the area’s resources. During the struggles Europeans pitted Native American groups against one another. The end result was catastrophic. The English with their new Native American allies threatened to topple not just the mission system but also the entire Spanish presence in Florida. What weakened Spain even more—and at just the wrong time—was France’s reentry into the South in 1699.<sup>175</sup> Spain now had new boarders to defend and on the eve of Dickinson’s arrival in Florida, the entire South was in a period of adjustments and transition. The establishment of Spanish, English, and

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<sup>173</sup> *God’s Protecting Providence*, p. 72.

<sup>174</sup> *God’s Protecting Providence*, p. 81.

<sup>175</sup> Paul Hoffman, *Florida’s Frontiers* (Bloomington, 2002), p. 175.

French colonies adversely enmeshed native peoples in European rivalries.<sup>176</sup>

Nonetheless, as Richter suggests, almost everywhere Europeans went they found peoples trying to make some kind of alliance with them to gain access to the goods and power they might possess. These efforts to reach out to people of alien and dangerous ways are most striking in the way in which the arrival of newcomers exacerbated conflicts of one Native group with another. Contact with the Europeans inspired bitter conflicts over access to what the Europeans had to offer.<sup>177</sup>

Gallay suggests that two economies grew side by side in English Carolina. The first was a frontier exchange with Native Americans that brought in animal pelts and Indian slaves. This trade generated much needed capital and commodities to develop a plantation system, which produced food and wood products. At the heart of both economies lay slavery—slaves as laborers and slaves as commodities.<sup>178</sup> As in Jamaica, a long period of warfare, internal squabbles, and political realignments characterised this transition from frontier economy to plantation economy. Even with this economic expansion, between 1670 and 1730, South Carolina struggled to survive. Institutional weakness, political and economic uncertainty, and lawlessness characterised the colony, and many Carolina settlers shared no common purpose but to accumulate riches. During most of the proprietary period, the struggle for control over Native American affairs defined the colony's history and shaped the fortunes of all involved.<sup>179</sup>

The English recognised the importance of the missions to the colony of La Florida. Weakening the missions, they knew, would weaken Spain's hold on La Florida.

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<sup>176</sup> Gallay, *The Indian Slave Trade*, pp. 98-9.

<sup>177</sup> Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country*, p. 40.

<sup>178</sup> Gallay, *The Indian Slave Trade*, p. 49.

<sup>179</sup> Gallay, *The Indian Slave Trade*, p. 43.

Having established the Charlestown settlement in 1670, English interests began to chip away at the missions to the south, beginning with raids in 1680 on San Buenaventura de Guadalquini on St. Simons Island and Santa Catalina de Guale, both on the Georgia coast. In the space of five years, 1702-1706, moreover, the South changed forever. Disease and an alliance between the English and Native Americans decimated Florida's aboriginal population.<sup>180</sup> The Apalachee mission system collapsed.<sup>181</sup> Slave raiders drove the Timucua from their homes and enslaved many more. The French and the Alabama, Choctaw, and Chickasaw struggled for control over the Gulf South. The English confined the Spanish in northern Florida to the environs of Saint Augustine and Pensacola; their Native American allies now raided for Native American captives as far south as the Florida Keys. In the entire South, no one was immune nor could remain isolated from European competition, and all Native Americans had to contend with the English quest for slaves. After 1706, reformers in Carolina called for new Indian policies, greater government control of trade, and a reconsideration of the meaning of empire.<sup>182</sup> The French and Spanish spent much of the decade trying to stop the British and allied Indian slave raids. For the Spanish, ending slave raids was a matter of

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<sup>180</sup> Bubonic plague, chicken pox, dysentery, diphtheria, influenza, malaria, measles, scarlet fever, small pox, typhoid, typhus, yellow fever, to this list add secondary infections like pneumonia, ill health caused by mistreatment and force labor, and raids by Indian and Carolinian slavers and militia. By 1763 warfare, slave raiding, and especially epidemics of disease had annihilated what had been a population of some 350,000 people at the time Ponce de León first came to Florida in 1513. Milanich, *Florida Indians from Ancient Times to the Present*, pp. vii, 171.

<sup>181</sup> Hann, *Apalachee. The Land Between the Rivers* (Gainesville, 1988); Hann and Bonnier McEwan, *The Apalachee Indians the Mission San Luis* (Gainesville, 1998).

<sup>182</sup> Galloway, *The Indian Slave Trade*, p. 154.

survival—the raiders decimated their most powerful allies, leaving the colony almost undefended.<sup>183</sup>

After the swirl of invasion that began with the English failure to take Saint Augustine in 1702 and ended with the Franco-Spanish fiasco against Charlestown in 1706, the Europeans scurried for alliances with Native Americans. South Carolina's phenomenal success in destroying Spanish missions raised English prestige and facilitated the recruitment of larger Native American forces for campaigns against their enemies.<sup>184</sup> Within several years, however South Carolinians so alienated their allies that they banded together in a pan-Indian movement that ended the large-scale slaving of native peoples. Steven Oatis suggests that:

the Yamasee War hit South Carolina as a horrifying shock that forced many colonists to reconsider everything they had previously believed about the southeastern Indians. A certain degree of paranoia had always played a role in South Carolina imperialism, but no one had really expected such a disaster to occur during a period of relative peace and prosperity.<sup>185</sup>

During their worst crisis of the early colonial period, South Carolinians faced not a single monolithic Indian enemy but a number of different Indian enemies who fought with different motives and different levels of intensity that were predicated by varying degrees of interactions with the colonists.<sup>186</sup> The Yamasee War devastated South Carolina and it took years for South Carolina to rebuild. By 1730, however, the colony emerged in a dramatically new form. A plantation-based economy revolved around rice

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<sup>183</sup> Gallay, *The Indian Slave Trade*, pp. 127-8.

<sup>184</sup> Gallay, *The Indian Slave Trade*, pp. 198.

<sup>185</sup> Oatis, *A Colonial Complex*, p. 113.

<sup>186</sup> Oatis, *A Colonial Complex*, pp. 113-4.

while continuing to produce cattle, food, and wood products for West Indian markets.<sup>187</sup>

Even before the Yamasee War gave economic precedence to the plantation over the Indian trade, colonists understood that the colony's future lay in agriculture. In the aftermath of the Yamasee War, slaveholding Carolinians yearned to stabilise their political system by removal of the Lords Proprietors in exchange for royal colony status.<sup>188</sup> As the colony's first half century drew to a close, pioneering life was giving way to plantation life as the dominant mode of existence, and Europeans and Indians were rapidly giving way to Africans as the dominant demographic presence in the coastal lowlands.<sup>189</sup>

### **Conclusion: A Cassina Toast**

Seventeenth-century Florida was a dynamic place where several autonomous Native American groups interacted with a number of different Europeans and their Native American allies living in mission towns around Saint Augustine. Native Americans along the southeast coast were not mere dupes caught up in the events of the colonial period. They maintained their way of life, their socio-political organisation, and their religion. They not only took an active role in the new world developing around them, they utilised the standing animosities of different Europeans to their advantage.<sup>190</sup> Their autonomy and their awareness of different Europeans influenced how the castaways would be treated during their time along Florida's east coast. But the process was complicated and unstable. Even though previous understandings, expectations, and generalised ideas about the 'other,' played important roles, the contacts themselves

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<sup>187</sup> Gallay, *The Indian Slave Trade*, p. 341.

<sup>188</sup> Gallay, *The Indian Slave Trade*, pp. 346-7.

<sup>189</sup> Peter Wood, *Black Majority. Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York, 1974), p. 130

<sup>190</sup> Milanich, *Florida Indians and the Invasion from Europe*, p. 51.

caused readjustments and rethinking as each side was forced to reformulate those ideas in the face of unexpected actions.<sup>191</sup> What advantages Native Americans could garner from different castaways also influenced intertribal interactions. Most importantly, local circumstance guided how the castaways from the *Reformation* moved from village to village.

In the context of competing empires, it appears that for this brief period, the Native Americans were victorious in contending with the uncertainties of this period. While the ultimate demise of these three groups waited on the horizon, Dickinson's journal presents a collection of highly sophisticated Native American groups who actively contended with the same issues Europeans faced at the turn of the eighteenth century. Europeans and Native Americans sought to maintain traditional ways of life, adjust to new trade opportunities, and incorporate new peoples and their actions into their collective worldviews. The Jobé, the Santaluces, and the Ais all figured out how to work these shifting circumstances to their advantage. In the end, these groups successfully maintained their autonomy and in some instances enhanced their position along this European frontier. They successfully incorporated Europeans and their goods into their world when it provided benefits. Generally, historians view Native American successes and failures in European terms but if we consider how agile these groups proved to be in their interactions with a diverse group of random Europeans, we can clearly recognize their successes.

By examining the events of Dickinson's shipwreck, I developed a clearer picture of the interactions of a diverse group of Atlantic world peoples during a brief period along a European frontier zone. This exploration of a particularly intriguing international

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<sup>191</sup> Schwartz, *Implicit Understandings*, p. 3.



sphere of interaction highlights that despite Florida's reputation as a backwater, the peninsula was deeply impacted by the material and ideological currents that were circulated by Spaniards, Native Americans, and other wayward Europeans and that Florida was not marginal to Atlantic history. Florida deserves an exclusively Atlantic treatment particularly because the dynamic nature of the people who interacted there represents the core of Atlantic history. Atlantic history is not necessarily about understanding English colonies or Spanish colonies or an African or Native experience in the context of those competing Europeans. Atlantic history should be about the world all these people created together. This is not a world constructed by historians; rather, it is a world cultivated and maintained by people contending with the uncertainties of the colonial period. A truly Atlantic experience awaits scholars willing to challenge historiographical norms and reconcile that individuals and their interactions with all types of Atlantic peoples guided the development of the colonial period.

I further attempted to 'deliver' Dickinson's journal from historical obscurity. For too long, historians have viewed the events of Dickinson's journal within an imperialist lens.<sup>192</sup> While Dickinson's journal frequently appears in the footnotes of anthropological, historical, and literary monographs, scholars have collectively disregarded the richness of the account. Traditional approaches to captivity narratives and the ethnographical commentary contained therein deserve to be reevaluated. Ultimately, the complexity of the multicultural interactions of Dickinson's journal have been muted by scholars who perpetuate standard narratives about European and Native American interactions. Many opportunities await scholars willing to reconsider Dickinson's journal. I utilised

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<sup>192</sup> See Andrews and Andrews, *Jonathan Dickinson's Journal* and Bushnell, 'Escape of the Nickaleers'.

Dickinson's narrative to explore how local and trans-Atlantic cultural, religious, and political currents of the late-seventeenth century Atlantic world influenced the interactions of a diverse group of Atlantic world peoples to reveal the complex interplay between power and perception. I also illustrated that the late-seventeenth century Atlantic world, especially along a European frontier, was a very uncertain and dynamic place where new exigencies outweighed customs

The peoples involved in the shipwreck narrative represent a cross-section of the eighteenth-century Atlantic world. Breaking out of traditional historiographical approaches is a difficult task. Future consideration may be given to exploring how the experiences of the castaway women differed from those of their male counterparts or to how enslaved Africans viewed their captivity differently than their white counterparts. Even though Dickinson's narrative is a single event, the multi-cultural interactions from the narrative cannot be treated in isolation. By examining this multi-cultural episode, this chapter suggests that British colonials did not exclusively guide the development of the British Atlantic colonies. The interactions of British colonials with other Europeans, Africans, and Native Americans along several European frontiers had profound effects on the development of the Atlantic world colonies and their subsequent convergence into the British Empire. Florida, however, remained a source of problems for the English well into the eighteenth century.

Dickinson's experiences in Florida certainly influenced his perceptions of the Atlantic world. By 1699, London was the sole survivor of Dickinson's enslaved Africans who had accompanied him in Florida. Shortly after arriving in Philadelphia Dickinson began to engage in trade to the Caribbean and unfettered he returned to the sea. The peril

of Florida fundamentally altered Dickinson's entrance into Philadelphia's mercantile society. The prospect and potential of the mid-Atlantic, however, fell short of Dickinson expectations. Dickinson's Atlantic world was changing once again and he would have to adjust accordingly.

## CHAPTER 4: NEGOTIATING AN UNCERTAIN ATLANTIC MARKETPLACE

It seems strange yet this place hath not a Trade with Jamaica, its trade with Barbadoes is very considerable & the produce of [that] country at a great rate amongst us.<sup>1</sup>

Before departing Jamaica, Dickinson, encouraged by a plethora of promotional tracts and popular misconceptions, probably envisioned Philadelphia as a bustling port teeming with opportunity.<sup>2</sup> When Dickinson arrived in Philadelphia on 1 April 1697, ‘Penn’s Woods’ had developed exponentially since its inception in 1681 but the colony did not resemble the beacon of hope Dickinson envisioned.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, the emerging port town must have been a welcome sight after Dickinson’s long and arduous journey from Jamaica. The nine-month journey took the lives of seven of the original passengers aboard the *Reformation* and left indelible marks on Dickinson, his family, and his enslaved Africans as they attempted to adjust to life in Pennsylvania.<sup>4</sup>

While both trans-Atlantic and local circumstances upset the consistency of trade to and from the adolescent port city, political squabbles, unscrupulous business affairs,

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<sup>1</sup> Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Maria Dickinson Logan Family Papers, 1671-1890, Jonathan Dickinson Letterbook, 1698-1701, Jonathan Dickinson to Francis Dickinson, 28 November 1698.

<sup>2</sup> The literature promoting Pennsylvania to investors and potential immigrants presented a productive and socially harmonious colony, one free from economic dislocation, conflict with Native Americans, and political or cultural anxieties. In reality Pennsylvania suffered from the same issues of many Anglo-Atlantic colonies. John Smolenski, *Friends and Strangers. The Making of Creole Culture in Colonial Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia, 2010), p. 83.

<sup>3</sup> Even though Penn pre-established much of the machinery of government, the first years of Pennsylvania were distinguished not by the orderly establishment of political institutions and purposeful development of the economy, but rather by wholesale confusion and chronic friction between sections, groups, and individuals. Gary Nash, *Quakers and Politics. Pennsylvania, 1681-1726* (Princeton, 1968), p. 48.

<sup>4</sup> For a general survey of the mid-Atlantic colonies see: Ned Landsman, *Crossroads of Empire. The Middle Colonies in British North America* (Baltimore, 2010).

inconsistent markets, unstable labor supplies, deteriorating relations with Native Americans, and infighting amongst the colony's leading figureheads created substantial worries for Pennsylvania colonists.<sup>5</sup> Despite the arrival of many colonists at the turn of the eighteenth century and an increasingly diverse economy, the future of Pennsylvania, as it was in Jamaica, was still uncertain.<sup>6</sup> Consequently during the summer of 1697, Dickinson once again found himself in a difficult spot. Nearly penniless and without employment as a result of his shipwreck in Florida, Dickinson decided that trans-Atlantic trade would provide the best opportunity for personal advancement but new uncertainties would hamper his already precarious road to prosperity.

At the turn of the eighteenth century, uncertainty and irregularity plagued trans-Atlantic trade routes. Colonial markets were unpredictable and unreliable while plantation productivity, in many colonies, was clearly inconsistent. In effort to gain more economic control over colonies, and their potential profits, both local and imperial legislators attempted to regulate trans-Atlantic merchantmen and their commerce. The social and economic direction of the Anglo-Atlantic colonies, as a coherent whole, however, remained just a vague outline of what imperial officials envisioned.

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<sup>5</sup> Smolenski suggests that 'from one angle, early Pennsylvania's governing Quakers look almost like a cliché—a dissenting group so long denied power that they became intoxicated with even a whiff of it.' Gary Nash suggests that early Quakers created 'a make-believe world' in which 'words became more important than actions and points of ceremonial propriety took precedent over legislative proposals.' Smolenski further argues that 'beneath these persistent conflicts' both internal and external 'about the management of the political, diplomatic, and legal discourse lay unresolved questions about the nature of colonial authority and identity in early Pennsylvania'. Smolenski, *Friends and Strangers*, pp. 105-09; Nash, *Quakers and Politics*, p. 293.

<sup>6</sup> The 'human ground swell' that broke upon Pennsylvania's shores in the first four years of settlement was evidence of the hopes and aspirations, which Penn had aroused with his strenuous promotional efforts. By the close of 1685, when the first great wave of immigration ended, almost ninety ships had delivered about eight thousand immigrants to Pennsylvania. Nash, *Quakers and Politics*, pp. 49-50.

Engendered by the diverse nature of their settlement, colonial societies were comprised of widely dispersed peoples from various social backgrounds. Consequently, the multifarious colonists with their oft-incongruent goals lived under ill-defined social, economic, and political structures

The development of relatively isolated colonies that stretched from New England to the West Indies evolved according to regional and local circumstances without much direct control from a nascent imperial governmental structure, which continually failed to regulate the interactions between the colonists, indigenous peoples, and other Europeans.<sup>7</sup> As a result, provincial governments and commercial marketplaces, at least at the beginning of the eighteenth century, displayed a marked diversity. This diversity resulted from the individual attempts of the colonies to regulate their relationships with their immediate Native American and European neighbors. By extension, inter-colonial relationships, like the personal connections that came to weave these disparate places together, continually evolved according to the directives of individual agendas.

Lack of imperial oversight created a logistical nightmare for those commissioned to regulate the affairs of the Anglo-Atlantic colonies. This uncertainty at home, however, created opportunities abroad for enterprising individuals willing to shoulder the risks of trans-Atlantic and international commerce. Largely left to their own designs, colonial merchants, who were ‘on the ground first’, exhausted every viable avenue for personal advancement by developing and maintaining reciprocal relationships in colonies around

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<sup>7</sup> Ian Steele suggests that ‘the variety of experiences in the English colonies attending the Glorious Revolution in England is suggestive. The West Indian colonies all went through a six-month period of uncertainty without actual revolution. The range of experience in the North American colonies emphasizes their relative isolation from each other that winter.’ Ian Steele, *The English Atlantic. An Exploration of Communication and Community, 1675-1740* (Oxford, 1986), p. 109.

the Atlantic Ocean. As Peter Wood suggests, ‘freed from old pressures and surrounded by new ones, men and women from three continents forged intimate relationships based upon diverse traditions and precarious circumstances.’<sup>8</sup>

Despite legislative attempts to regulate the affairs of Anglo-merchantmen, inter-colonial and trans-national trade provided great opportunities for profits during the latter-half of the eighteenth century. As the number of locales immersed in Atlantic connections increased, overlapping transatlantic and inter-colonial connections grew increasingly complex.<sup>9</sup> During the first two decades of the eighteenth century, however, many of these well-defined trade networks simply did not exist. While studies of trans-Atlantic networks lie at the heart of Atlantic-world historiography, the *formation* of individual networks—family, ethnic, religious, business, and social—has not received as much scholarly attention as it deserves. Typically, historians treat trans-Atlantic connections as impersonal mechanisms without regard to individual agency or local circumstances. Therefore, much of the historiography inadvertently implies that inter-colonial networks always benefited the mother country and that individuals worked for the collective advancement of the Anglo-colonial endeavor. The following exploration of Dickinson’s Atlantic network, however, reveals that Atlantic world commerce emerged as a result of lower-order relationships, which serendipitously created larger and very useful economic and social institutions. This examination carefully considers that early-eighteenth-century Anglo-Atlantic traders attempted to take advantage of trade to further their own personal commercial and social goals in the context of their local situations.

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<sup>8</sup> Peter Wood, *Black Majority. Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York, 1974), p. 98.

<sup>9</sup> April Lee Hatfield, *Atlantic Virginia. Intercolonial Relations in the Seventeenth Century* (Philadelphia, 2004), p. 39.

The creation of a framework for the expansion of what became the British colonial endeavor after 1707 was perhaps more circumstantial than is currently assumed by scholars.

Undoubtedly, historians of the Anglo-Atlantic recognise the importance of colonial trade carried on between North America, the Caribbean, Europe, and Africa, Nevertheless, as Richard Pares argues, ‘the first founders of the English colonies did not distinctly mean to establish complementary sources of supply...only after some years of trial and error did a familiar pattern of American trade emerge.’<sup>10</sup> From this vantage point, a vantage point well-articulated by April Lee Hatfield, ‘trade patterns evolved in response to the desire to find markets for goods in nascent colonial economies already undergoing significant regional specialisation.’<sup>11</sup> Moreover, as Bernard Bailyn suggests, that ‘intricate commercial mechanisms...[with] many interrelated parts...[was] not an impersonal machine existing above men’s heads, outside their lives, to which they attached themselves for purposes of trade.’ Rather, ‘Atlantic world merchants of the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries...witnessed the creation of this network of trade...[and] they knew that human relationships were the bonds that kept its parts together.’<sup>12</sup> David Hancock, who skillfully illustrates these types of ‘lower order relationships,’ which resulted in many trans-Atlantic networks, contends that ‘inter-imperial commerce, both legal and illegal, shaped everyday life in the Atlantic world.’ He further suggests that by ‘establishing links and building networks, the people of the seventeenth and eighteenth century Atlantic world created an infrastructure that bound

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<sup>10</sup> Richard Pares, *Yankees and Creoles. The Trade between North America and the West Indies before the American Revolution* (Cambridge, 1956), p. 2.

<sup>11</sup> Hatfield, *Atlantic Virginia*, pp. 41-42.

<sup>12</sup> Bernard Bailyn, *The New England Merchants in the Seventeenth Century* (New York, 1955), p. 87.



them together—as each others’ suppliers and customers, as partners, agents, and competitors, and eventually as compatriots.’ Yet Hancock laments the fact that historians, ‘by confining themselves to studying particular imperial and colonial constructs, have developed neither the historiography nor the models to understand and fully explain the intertwined nature of the early modern Atlantic economy.’<sup>13</sup>

Dickinson and a small cohort of West Indian transplants were largely responsible for initiating, developing, and maintaining one the most significant trade relationships of the eighteenth century, the exchange between Philadelphia and Jamaica. As evidenced from the quotation above, this complementary avenue of exchange did not exist when Dickinson arrived in Philadelphia in 1697. Furthermore, as a result of larger Atlantic influences this type of trade developed along lines that were anything but exclusively English. As Hatfield suggests, ‘merchants and mariners looked across national boundaries to gauge themselves against “outsiders” in cultural terms; they did so without apparent hostility or violence, willing perhaps to recognise that the functioning of the Atlantic world depended on commercial cooperation despite national, ethnic, cultural, and religious differences.’ Thus, by creating a proximity that made such differences more familiar, merchants like Dickinson defined what it meant to be an Atlantic world merchant.<sup>14</sup>

The purpose of this chapter is to unpack the idea that ‘the reality of decentralisation and the power of agency complicates the traditional understanding of states and empires’. If we abandon the idea of the centrality of the mother countries, their rulers, and their institutions, we might imagine a grittier and more organic Atlantic world

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<sup>13</sup> David Hancock, *Oceans of Wine. Madeira and the Emergence of American Trade and Taste* (New Haven, 2009), p. xxii.

<sup>14</sup> Hatfield, *Atlantic Virginia*, p. 67.

constructed from the strands of individual lives and the repercussions of their actions rather than an Atlantic world engineered from above the heads of its constitute parts.<sup>15</sup> Considering that colonists did not intentionally set out to create an inter-imperial Atlantic marketplace nor did they plan to develop Atlantic-wide institutions or networks, this chapter argues that as a result of the uncertainties of trans-Atlantic commerce at the turn of the eighteenth century, Dickinson actively exhausted every viable opportunity to advance his personal ventures despite a myriad of forces working against him. By extension, this chapter argues that Pennsylvania colonists, as did their Anglo-Jamaican counterparts, struggled to find their place within the emerging Atlantic world. They did, however, find a place in this world and by doing so shaped the patterns of the Atlantic world in significant ways.

This chapter is organised into four sections. The first briefly examines the imperial superstructure of the Anglo-Atlantic world at the turn of the eighteenth century to provide the context for the environment in which Dickinson operated. A brief examination of Dickinson's initial arrival in Philadelphia, his transition from a Jamaican planter to Philadelphia merchant, and his initial mercantile failures provides the personal context for examining the development of Dickinson's trans-Atlantic network. By providing the context for the problems Dickinson faced as an early-eighteenth-century trans-Atlantic merchant including finding viable goods and markets, obtaining credit, negotiating restrictions placed on merchants by the imperial and provincial governments, as well as the unilateral threat of piracy, the last section examines how Dickinson mitigated the difficulties of early-eighteenth-century trans-Atlantic trade. Ultimately, this chapter aims to shed light on Arthur Jensen's suggestion that 'the earliest settlers in

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<sup>15</sup> Hancock, *Oceans of Wine*, pp. xiii-xxix.

Pennsylvania were convinced of the desirability of trade, [but] they were less certain about the final nature of the trade which was to emerge.’<sup>16</sup>

### **Atlantic Superstructure**

Ian Steele argues that ‘by 1675 the time of the tentative and often tragic beginnings of isolated English colonies were in the past.’ Despite the fact that the populations and economies of Jamaica and the Carolinas were still in their infancy and even though Pennsylvania, Georgia, and Nova Scotia were still to be founded,’ Steele contends that ‘the outline of the political economy of the English Atlantic empire [had] already developed...[and the] English had declared and defended an Atlantic maritime empire.’<sup>17</sup> By 1675, England may have ‘declared and defended’ an Atlantic maritime empire but English officials had yet to define what the Atlantic empire meant or how it was *supposed* to function. Nevertheless, efforts to define the relationship between the mother country and its colonies began in earnest during the mid-seventeenth century.

Wesley Frank Craven suggested that ‘it is easy, as one reviews the sum total of the actions taken by the king and Parliament during the five years immediately following the Restoration, to state...the main features of what may be described as an emerging colonial policy.’ Undoubtedly, ‘the English government, which theretofore had given only fitful attention to the colonies, obviously now had come to place a higher value on the colonies.’<sup>18</sup> Charles II, in an attempt to bring so many remote colonies under uniform inspection for their future regulation, security, and improvement, signed a commission appointing thirty-five members of the Privy Council, the nobility, gentry, and merchants,

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<sup>16</sup> Arthur Jensen, *The Maritime Commerce of Colonial Philadelphia* (Madison, 1963), p. 6.

<sup>17</sup> Steele, *The English Atlantic*, p. 17.

<sup>18</sup> Wesley Frank Craven, *The Colonies in Transition, 1660-1713* (New York, 1968), p. 58.

to a Council for Foreign Plantations. This council required from every governor an exact account of the constitution of his laws and government, the number of inhabitants, and, in short, all the information he was able to give regarding individual colonies.<sup>19</sup> Poorly organised and ill-equipped, however, the home government failed to define an overarching colonial policy.<sup>20</sup> Craven further suggested that:

there was no colonial office to provide assurance of informed and coordinated acts by different branches of the government; the councils of trade and plantations which functioned, on and off, during the course of the fifteen years after the Restoration had no archives worth mentioning, no staff of bureaucratic experts to guide them; and membership was at times cumbersomely large, and might vary according to the fortunes experienced by politicians in contests over other and more important questions.<sup>21</sup>

Several decades later, in 1696, the Board of Trade replaced the Lords of Trade. Though naturally subordinate to the will of the Privy Council, the Board of Trade was in no sense a committee of the Council. Strictly speaking, the Board of Trade possessed no real power of its own and its function remained merely advisory.<sup>22</sup>

Nevertheless, these early regulatory committees passed important legislation attempting to regulate trans-Atlantic and inter-imperial trade. By regulating direct colonial trade with other European countries, the Navigation Acts of 1660, 1662, and 1663 aimed to redefine the colonial relationship by forcing colonial development into

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<sup>19</sup> Noel Sainsbury (ed), *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series, America and the West Indies, 1574-1600* (London, 1860), p. 492

<sup>20</sup> For a general overview of imperial reform in the late seventeenth century see Charles Andrews, *Colonial Period of American History* (4 vols., New Haven, 1937).

<sup>21</sup> Craven, *The Colonies in Transition*, p. 48; Charles Andrews, *British Commissions, Councils, and Committees, 1622-1675* (Baltimore, 1908).

<sup>22</sup> Craven, *The Colonies in Transition*, p. 255.

lines favorable to England.<sup>23</sup> Under the Navigation Acts, English territories and Anglo-merchants comprised a unit, the success of which was to be measured by their ability to gather riches at the expense of rival states.<sup>24</sup> In short no goods could be imported into or exported from the colonies save in English ships—English built, English owned, and English manned. In other words, the Navigation Acts granted English shipping an unqualified monopoly on all trade with the colonies.<sup>25</sup> By excluding other Europeans, colonial regulation attempted to make England self-sufficient in their supply of New World commodities while the colonies provided a fixed market for manufactured goods from England.

The Navigation Acts, as Craven suggests, ‘help to mark, as they undoubtedly helped to stimulate, one of the most significant developments in the long history of England’s economy...[but] it is important to remember that these developments stretched out over the next fifty years and one must not overestimate the farsightedness of those who enacted the legislation.’<sup>26</sup> Ultimately, due to a lack of rigorous enforcement, the

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<sup>23</sup> For the Navigation Acts see: Lawrence A. Harper, *The English Navigation Acts. A Seventeenth Century Experiment in Social Engineering* (New York, 1939).

<sup>24</sup> Bailyn, *The New England Merchants in the Seventeenth Century*, p. 113.

<sup>25</sup> It further required that certain colonial products, enumerated by name, to be shipped only to England, Ireland, or another of the English plantations. The first enumerated commodities were sugar, tobacco, cotton, indigo, ginger, fustic, and other dyewoods. Craven, *The Colonies in Transition*, p. 35. See also: Frank Wesley Pitman, *The Development of the British West Indies, 1700-1763* (New Haven, 1917).

<sup>26</sup> The reactions to the legislation in the colonies varied. For example, if England after 1660 held a monopoly of colonial tobacco, the colonists in turn were given, through preferential tariffs and other devices, a virtual monopoly of the English market for tobacco. The colonists also enjoyed additional compensations for the restrictions imposed upon their trade and the encouragement for the development of their own merchant marine. This case should not discount the significance of immediate, vigorous, and continuing protest by the colonists. These protests, as expected, came chiefly from the colonies producing enumerated commodities. New England suffered no adverse effects from the legislation but Virginia and Barbados colonists faced with the prospect

Navigation Acts served only to deter, but not prevent, international trade. In some cases, the acts opened new avenues for trade and may have made illicit-trading all the more profitable. In the end, Dickinson, along with many other trans-Atlantic merchants, simply ignored the Navigation Acts.

### **First Arrival and Early Transitions**

Despite the burden of increasing regulations, Dickinson developed and maintained an impressive trans-Atlantic and multi-national trading network for nearly twenty-five years. Dickinson's trans-Atlantic network functioned on several levels. His network, like his worldview, constantly evolved to meet the demands of the dynamic emerging Atlantic economy. Immediate family and their relations by marriage comprised Dickinson's innermost circle. Dickinson's family, at least by the early 1700s, stretched from Jamaica, to the mid-Atlantic colonies, and across the ocean to England.<sup>27</sup> Beyond his family connections, the Quaker community served Dickinson, like many other Quaker businessmen, in developing a much larger Atlantic network.<sup>28</sup> Despite never meeting a number of his business associates, they shared a common connection to the Society of

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of a rigidly limited English market incapable of absorbing their full crops at favorable prices. Craven, *The Colonies in Transition*, pp. 33, 38-39.

<sup>27</sup> Dickinson immediate and extended family members included: Ezekiel Gomersall (Brother-in-law in Jamaica); Caleb Dickinson (Brother in Wiltshire, England and Jamaica); Francis Dickinson (Father in Jamaica); Joshua Crosby (Brother-in-law in Jamaica); Joseph Crosby (Brother-in-law in Jamaica); Leonard Vassall (Brother-in-law in Jamaica); Mother Griffiths (Mother-in-Law in Jamaica); Isaac Gale (Brother-in-law in Jamaica); Jonathan Gale (Brother-in-law in Jamaica); Mary Dickinson Gomersall (Sister in Jamaica); Nat Herring (Cousin in unknown location); Joseph Smith (Kinsmen in Virginia); Walter Newberry (Cousin in London); Robert Lurting (Cousin in unknown location) 14. Thomas Hyam (Cousin in London)

<sup>28</sup> See Frederick Tolles, *Meeting House and Counting House* (New York, 1948); Tolles, *Quakers and Atlantic Culture* (New York, 1960); Nash, *Quakers and Politics*; Smolenski, *Friends and Strangers*.

Friends that served to maintain their circum-Atlantic relationships with Dickinson.<sup>29</sup>

During his trading career, Dickinson maintained relationships with at least fourteen extended family members on three continents and 102 business associates including eighty-four Quakers outside of Philadelphia.<sup>30</sup>

In the 1960s, Frederick Tolles suggested that:

nowhere is the cultural unity of the North Atlantic littoral more apparent than in the little world the Society of Friends created a distinctive community—a spiritual *imperium in imperio*—which outlasted the breakup of the old British Empire and still persists to a remarkable degree in the modern world.<sup>31</sup>

Quakerism, by its very nature, was always a transatlantic religion because meetings in America actively kept regular and close contact with meetings abroad.<sup>32</sup> For all intents and purposes, the Society of Friends made Pennsylvania their unofficial Quaker headquarters in North America.<sup>33</sup> Therefore, the commercial success of Quaker

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<sup>29</sup> The driving force behind the development of Pennsylvania was undoubtedly the Society of Friends. Persecuted nearly everywhere else around the Atlantic, Quakers found a safe haven in the woods along the Delaware River. Their freedom from outside persecution, however, did not ameliorate various pressures from within. Many Quakers struggled with political, cultural, and religious issues during their rise from obscurity to Atlantic world prominence. How to govern, how to conduct diplomacy, business, and everyday affairs became flash points for Quakers to define and redefine what it meant to be a proper Quaker. Rising to economic prosperity often times made it difficult to reconcile ‘plain living.’ See Tolles, *Meeting House and Counting House*; Tolles, *Quakers in Atlantic Culture*; Nash, *Quakers and Politics*; Smolenski, *Friends and Strangers*.

<sup>30</sup> See Library Company of Philadelphia, Jonathan Dickinson Letterbook, 1715-1721.

<sup>31</sup> Tolles, *Quakers and the Atlantic Culture*, p. 3.

<sup>32</sup> Karen Wulf, “‘Of the Old Stock’: Quakerism and Transatlantic Genealogies in Colonial British America’, in Elizabeth Mancke and Carole Shammas (eds), *The Creation of the British Atlantic World* (Baltimore, 2005), p. 310.

<sup>33</sup> By the opening of the eighteenth century, Quakerism found wide distributed and the bounds of their religious body were virtually identical with those of the old British Empire. Although no estimate of population for the seventeenth century is better than a guess, it is likely that there were close to 50,000 Quakers in the British Isles in

merchants, like Dickinson, who aggressively established their place within the Atlantic trading world accounts for a majority of Pennsylvania's economic growth.<sup>34</sup> By virtue of their commercial, religious, personal, and family contacts, the Philadelphia Quakers kept in close touch with the entire North Atlantic world.<sup>35</sup> Tolles further contends that while:

the intelligence which they received through their *correspondents* and from itinerant "public Friends" was chiefly concerned with prices current and the prosperity of the Truth, inevitably it broadened their view of the world, tending to overcome the provincialism so likely to be characteristic of a colonial people.<sup>36</sup>

The lives of people like Dickinson show the highly permeable nature of the late-seventeenth-century English colonial world. With frequent travel between colonies, some social and economic communities easily bridged geographical distance and political boundaries but did so only by actively maintaining personal connections. Many of these personal connections were maintained for the purposes of profitable trade.

In 1696 Dickinson fell victim to geographic distance and political boundaries during his time in Florida. Thankfully, in Dickinson's greatest time of need the Quaker community came to his aid once he arrived in Philadelphia. Dickinson's adventure from Jamaica to Philadelphia, via Spanish Florida, exposed Dickinson to a multi-national world relatively unfamiliar to him in Jamaica but also opened his eyes to the potential that waited beyond the shores of Jamaica. When Dickinson arrived in Philadelphia on 1

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1700 and at least 40,000 in the Western Hemisphere. Tolles, *Quakers and the Atlantic Culture*, p. 24.

<sup>34</sup> Ned Landsman, 'The Middle Colonies: New Opportunities for Settlement, 1660-1700' in Nicholas Canny (ed), *The Origins of Empire* (Oxford, 1998), p. 363.

<sup>35</sup> Between 1652 and 1702 almost 150 Quaker ministers visited America from England. Hatfield, *Atlantic Virginia*, p. 124; Tolles, *Quakers and the Atlantic Culture*, p. 14.

<sup>36</sup> Tolles, *Meeting House and Counting House*, p. 91.



April 1697, he faced considerable personal and professional obstacles brought on by his ordeal along the Florida coast. Dickinson, his young family, his enslaved Africans, and his friend, Robert Barrow, endured an epic eight-month journey from Jamaica to Philadelphia. As a result of the shipwreck Dickinson lost nearly £2,000 in stolen or abandoned cargo and bullion.<sup>37</sup> Therefore, he arrived in Philadelphia nearly destitute. Without capital to invest in any sort of trade, land, or agriculture, Dickinson relied on his family and friends to support him.<sup>38</sup> The greater Quaker community offered to support his family by finding him temporary employment within the Quaker-dominated provincial government.<sup>39</sup>

The residual effects of malnutrition, exposure, as well as, months of physical and psychological abuse, plagued the minds and bodies of the Dickinsons and their enslaved Africans for years. Witnessing the deaths of a dear friend, Robert Barrow several days after their arrival in Philadelphia, as well as a kinsman, Benjamin Allen, and several enslaved Africans only added to a lingering sense of despair in the months that followed their ‘deliverance’. A year after arriving in Philadelphia, Dickinson lamented to his

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<sup>37</sup> This figure includes £1,500 in Spanish coin and goods lost during the shipwreck.

<sup>38</sup> Luckily for Dickinson he had ‘friends that [were] willing to promote [him] to support [his] famaly.’ Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Maria Logan Family Papers, Jonathan Dickinson Letterbook, Dickinson to Caleb Dickinson, 14 May 1698. Prominent Friends in the Philadelphia assembly suggested him for a position as a clerk in 1698. He also held that same position in Philadelphia county court from 1698 to 1699. Both of these positions, however, were meant to be a temporary fix until Dickinson could get financially on his feet. Craig W. Horle, ‘Jonathan Dickinson’, in Craig W. Horle, Jeffery L. Scheib and Joseph S. Foster (eds), *Lawmaking and Legislators in Pennsylvania. A Biographical Dictionary, 1710-1756* (Philadelphia, 1991), p. 309; Charles Andrews and Evangeline Andrews, *Jonathan Dickinson’s Journal or God’s Protecting Providence. Being the Narrative of a Journey from Port Royal in Jamaica to Philadelphia between August 23, 1696 and April 1, 1697* (New Haven, 1495), p. 131.

<sup>39</sup> Dickinson served as a clerk for the General Assembly of Pennsylvania in 1698 and as a clerk for the Philadelphia County Court in 1698 and 1699.

brother, Caleb, that his sufferings on route ‘laide a foundation of weekness.’ He further suggested that he was ‘sinsible of the sharp Tokes of them at Times.’<sup>40</sup> The emotional impact of leaving Jamaica, shipwrecking in Florida, and relocating to Philadelphia also took a considerable toll on Mary Dickinson.<sup>41</sup> Dickinson explained to his brother, Caleb, about Mary’s initial apprehension regarding their departure from Jamaica:

at our first comeing ye thoughts of our losses & various exercises in parting with  
nere and deare relations and forsaking our native country coming  
through...strange land...brought great trouble on my poore wife not easely to be  
demonstrated.<sup>42</sup>

The harshness of their first Pennsylvanian winter further compounded Dickinson’s woes.<sup>43</sup> Dickinson explained to his brother that their first season outside the West Indies was ‘an extream[ly] hard winter.’<sup>44</sup> In another letter to a West Indian Friend, Dickinson suggested that the ‘cold would violently seaze yee that thou cold hardly live;’ he continued, ‘it is certainly the most terrible thing to those have liv’d in ye West Indies.’<sup>45</sup> Writing to his father, Dickinson revealed the larger implications of the harsh

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<sup>40</sup> HSP, JDLB, Dickinson to Caleb Dickinson, 11 May 1698.

<sup>41</sup> Mary must have endured quite a difficult struggle during her journey from Jamaica to Philadelphia. The experiences of a new mother, unable to nurse and care for her child, probably left considerable marks on her as a mother and wife. Having to leave her family behind in Jamaica may have also provided many anxious moments. Whatever physical hardships she endured during the journey must have subsided shortly after her arrival in Philadelphia because three months after their arrival, Dickinson and Mary conceived their second child, Joseph, who was born the 3 April 1698.

<sup>42</sup> HSP, JDLB, Dickinson to Caleb Dickinson, 11 May 1698.

<sup>43</sup> Both Dickinson (1663) and Mary (1673) were born in Jamaica and the majority of both the Dickinson and Gale families resided in Jamaica. Neither visited England and there is no evidence that either traveled extensively in regions beyond the Caribbean.

<sup>44</sup> HSP, JDLB, Dickinson to Price, 16 April 1698.

<sup>45</sup> HSP, JDLB, Dickinson to James Pinnick, 21 April 1698. Writing to another friend he suggested that the ‘extreamity of cold is hard to be bourne.’ Dickinson noted

winter. That first winter Dickinson's slaves were 'all...sickly & very chargable;' he further lamented that 'I have but three left & one of them (Hagar) taken ill with distemper two or three days past the two that are well is London & Bell (Beu).'<sup>46</sup> Furthermore, those enslaved individuals still alive proved to be problematic for Dickinson because 'they have been a great charge unto this winter being not able to earn their bread.'<sup>47</sup> He continued, 'hav[ing] been sick...Negroe Beu dyed which is a great loss and her help much missed amongst our children.'<sup>48</sup> The harshness of the winter, however, was a fleeting problem as Dickinson concerned himself with figuring out how to make a living in Pennsylvania. Dickinson had very little money and his only tangible asset, his three remaining enslaved Africans, proved to be a financial burden.

Deciding between planting and trading occupied Dickinson's mind for several months after his arrival. He wrote to his brother, Caleb, expressing his view that despite Pennsylvania being a 'pleasant thriving country...West Indian planters are at a loss when here' suggesting that they were 'not accustomed to ye labour & toyle that is required.' The change, Dickinson suggested, '[in] the manner of living & providing for their Famalies meets with such a change at which maketh it seem hard to be bourne.'<sup>49</sup> It is uncertain why this transition proved so difficult for Dickinson. Clearly, he engaged in trade while in Jamaica and mixed with many West-Indian associates who also traded across the Atlantic Ocean. During the period from 1686 to 1692, probate records suggest

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that 'others that came [from] Barbadoes,' also found it hard to bear. HSP, JDLB, Dickinson to Wilson, 11 May 1698.

<sup>46</sup> HSP, JDLB, Dickinson to Francis Dickinson, 21 April 1698; HSP, JDLB, Dickinson to Francis Dickinson, 13 May 1698.

<sup>47</sup> HSP, JDLB, Dickinson to Caleb Dickinson, 25 April 1698.

<sup>48</sup> HSP, JDLB, Dickinson to Francis Dickinson, 18 October 1698 and 28 November 1698.

<sup>49</sup> HSP, JDLB, Dickinson to Wilson, 11 May 1698.

that half of all men who died in Jamaica were merchants.<sup>50</sup> For Philadelphia, Nash provided evidence that suggests that ‘at least fifty-six merchants took up residence’ during the 1680s and at least another twelve merchants ‘cast their lot with Penn’s colony’ between 1690 and 1695. Many of these first merchants, however, died before the turn of the eighteenth century.<sup>51</sup> The size of the infant merchant community provided a great opportunity for Dickinson to carve a niche in the commerce of the burgeoning colony. During the last two decades of the seventeenth century, very few Philadelphia merchants had consolidated or solidified permanent trade patterns. Pennsylvania’s shortcomings proved to be Dickinson’s opportunities and finding the right markets and securing a reciprocal exchange allowed Dickinson to set the economic curve. Theoretically, Dickinson could turn large profits in both the Caribbean and the mid-Atlantic colonies by establishing the first connections between Pennsylvania and Jamaica.<sup>52</sup>

This difficult transition from Jamaica, an emerging plantation colony with a comparatively stable labor force, to Pennsylvania with very few plantations and an unstable labor force, convinced Dickinson that he was ‘inclined to Trade’ because he found himself ‘less capeable in body then formerly to be concerned in any other Employ.’ Nevertheless, Dickinson did not forsake his planting interests in Jamaica. In fact, his Caribbean connections provided a major source of capital throughout the first two decades of the eighteenth century. Similarly, through the inter-colonial slave trade,

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<sup>50</sup> Nuala Zahedieh, ‘The Merchants of Port Royal, Jamaica, and the Spanish Contraband Trade, 1655-1692’, *William and Mary Quarterly*, 43:4 (1986), p. 570.

<sup>51</sup> Gary Nash, ‘The Early Merchants of Philadelphia,’ in Richard Dunn and Mary Maples Dunn (eds), *The World of William Penn* (Philadelphia, 1986), pp. 38-39

<sup>52</sup> Conversely, Nash suggests that ‘there are few parallels in colonial history to the economic success of Pennsylvania in the first two decades. Only three years after settlement, its capital city was firmly entrenched in the Barbados provisioning trade and had cut deep into New York’s control of the middle-Atlantic fur and tobacco markets’. Nash, *Quakers and Politics*, p. 56.

Dickinson's interests in the Caribbean provided a steady supply of labor for the undermanned mid-Atlantic colony (a topic to be explored further in the next chapter).

Therefore the term merchant should not be taken to imply simply trader because there was no single counterpart for the eighteenth century merchant. He was, at various times, exporter, importer, wholesaler, retailer, purchasing agent, banker, insurance underwriter, and attorney. Yet anyone who possessed sufficient capital could, of course, set-up in business as an importing and exporting merchant.<sup>53</sup> Dickinson, however, lacked enough capital to establish himself independently and he was forced to take on what goods he could from merchants in Jamaica on credit.<sup>54</sup>

Goods that were popular in Jamaica, however, proved to be problematic in Philadelphia. Dickinson attempted to sell a 'pipe of lime juice' he received from Jamaica in April 1698. He thought it was a 'mean commodity' because 'little or no punch [was] used' in Philadelphia.<sup>55</sup> By the summer of 1698 he was forced into 'selling lime juice per gallon;' but he still held some limejuice nearly nine months later.<sup>56</sup> At the same time Dickinson also found it difficult to sell 'three cask[s] of Bottles of Brandy.' He made

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<sup>53</sup> Jensen, *The Maritime Commerce of Colonial Philadelphia*, p. 12.

<sup>54</sup> Obtaining capital in a frontier society was difficult but necessary for rising above subsistence levels. Farmers used the promise of future crops to obtain credit; planters did the same but on a larger scale. They obtained credit or capital from a growing class of colonial merchants, who in turn obtained credit from British merchants. Obtaining credit was the most important factor in an individual's ability not only to expand but also to maintain an estate. Prosperity hinged of the promise of future profits. Seventeenth and early eighteenth century Atlantic commerce required that its participants undertake temporary debt to acquire goods for trade or consumption before their payment was available. Such debt was expected, as was the travel of debtors throughout the Atlantic world. Alan Galloway, *The Indian Slave Trade. The Rise of the English Empire in the American South, 1670-1717* (New Haven, 2002), p. 246; Hatfield, *Atlantic Virginia*, p. 178.

<sup>55</sup> HSP, JDLB, Dickinson to Alexander Parris, 16 April 1698.

<sup>56</sup> HSP, JDLB, Dickinson to Alexander Parris, 5 July 1698 and Dickinson to Alexander Parris, 24 November 1698.

offers to ‘most of [the] ordinary keeps’ in Philadelphia but many had as much ‘as they know what to doe with.’ He asserted that rum was ‘better esteemed of by ye generality.’<sup>57</sup> A month later the brandy remained unsold because ‘this place [Philadelphia] will not vend it.’ He attempted to get rid of a cask with Joseph Kirle who was heading to Virginia ‘to find a market’ and sent another cask to New York.<sup>58</sup> Eventually, Dickinson, forced by the market, attempted to sell the ‘rest of the leaked bottles into a cask and by the gallon’ but he was ‘still trying to sell the last 6 or 7 gallons’ in November 1698.<sup>59</sup> Limejuice and brandy both apparently did not suit the desires of the Philadelphia consumer in the late 1690s.<sup>60</sup> Similarly, Isaac Norris found the New York market to be as unforgiving as his homeport when he loaded a ship at Madeira with ‘as much wine as it could stow’. He directed the ship to New York, where Rip Van Dam was to sell ten pipes but Norris’s wine did not sell there because ‘the tastes of the place differ[ed] from those of Philadelphia’.<sup>61</sup> The traffic between Philadelphia and New York was always active and as coastwise connections advanced during the eighteenth century port-to-port assistance occurred further afield.<sup>62</sup> The difficulties experienced by Dickinson and Norris, however, suggest that inter-colonial trade at the beginning of the eighteenth century was far from integrated. Further complicating matters, merchants had to predict what goods consumers desired and at what time of year they might fetch the best prices.

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<sup>57</sup> HSP, JDLB, Dickinson to Richard Dolling, 16 April 1698.

<sup>58</sup> HSP, JDLB, Dickinson to Richard Dolling, 11 May 1698.

<sup>59</sup> HSP, JDLB, Dickinson to Richard Dolling, 29 May 1698 and Dickinson to Richard Dolling, 28 November 1698.

<sup>60</sup> HSP, JDLB, Dickinson to David Davis, 4 July 1698.

<sup>61</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Richard Miles and Co., 26 November 1718; Hancock, *Oceans of Wine*, p. 219.

<sup>62</sup> Hancock, *Oceans of Wine*, p. 218.

## Negotiating Circumstances

Despite all his efforts, Dickinson's first few business ventures in Philadelphia were complete failures. Dickinson wrote to his brother, Caleb, 'my first interprize failes having gon on credit for £400 worth of goods to furnish sloop...I am about £300 in debt.'<sup>63</sup> Bad markets, the wrong goods, and the quality of goods he received all hampered Dickinson's efforts to build reliable trading ventures. Despite complications, the cargoes trading in and out of Philadelphia were exceedingly diverse. This diversity allowed for some maneuvering during glutted or thin markets but also complicated the process of sorting out what goods would provide reliable returns and at what time of year. Hancock suggests that 'glutted markets were among the most persistent vexations' for colonial merchants.<sup>64</sup> Dickinson, therefore, did not discriminate in which goods he dealt with from England, the West Indies, and further afield. While it appears that, as Harrold Gillingham suggests, 'merchants of those days dealt in everything salable', Dickinson's experiences support Frederick Tolles's suggestion that 'a good deal of experimentation was required before Philadelphia's trade settled into paths yielding steady profits.'<sup>65</sup> Dickinson's focus on establishing trade in Jamaica mirror the general sentiment that the 'West Indies market was eventually found to be the most satisfactory'.<sup>66</sup>

Within a year of his arrival in Philadelphia, Dickinson realised that he needed more money, a ship, and better control over the trading process if he was to make his way in trans-Atlantic trade. Dickinson actively attempted to create new markets in both

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<sup>63</sup> HSP, JDLB, Dickinson to Caleb Dickinson, 14 May 1698.

<sup>64</sup> Hancock, *Oceans of Wine*, p. 218.

<sup>65</sup> Harrold Gillingham, 'The Estate of Jonathan Dickinson, 1663-1722', *The Pennsylvania Magazine of Biography and History*, 59 (1935), p. 420; Tolles, *Meeting House and Counting House*, p. 86.

<sup>66</sup> Tolles, *Meeting House and Counting House*, p. 86.

Philadelphia and Jamaica and within a few years, Dickinson was dealing typical mid-Atlantic and West Indian goods including flour, bread, and beer from Pennsylvania and rum, molasses, and sugar from Jamaica. The fundamental problem was that there was not a market in Great Britain for the natural products of the Philadelphia region; therefore, Dickinson worked out schemes of triangular or polygonal trade whereby local exports could be exchanged for commodities marketable in England.<sup>67</sup> So, as Norris suggested in 1699, North Americans, especially beginners and small traders, liked to have West Indian partners for ‘disptach sake’ to buy produce at the best season and advance part of the ship’s return cargo from North America before the outward cargo sold.<sup>68</sup> Ultimately, Philadelphia’s direct trade with England was ‘remarkably slight’ during the period from 1681 to the 1740s. Steele contends that during the last five years of the seventeenth century, English outports received only one recorded cargo from Philadelphia.<sup>69</sup> In the end, the nature of trans-Atlantic trade led Dickinson to focus on developing trading to and from the West Indies while relying on his West Indian produce to generate profits in England.

For all the problems Dickinson faced trying to rebuild his career after the shipwreck in 1696, the lack of trade between Jamaica and Philadelphia presented a real opportunity for Dickinson to carve a niche into Philadelphia’s emerging trans-Atlantic economy. At the most elementary level, Dickinson, along with several other Jamaican transplants, was largely responsible for initiating trade between Philadelphia and Jamaica at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Other West-Indian counterparts, who relocated to the North American mainland, were also largely responsible for establishing

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<sup>67</sup> Tolles, *Meeting House and Counting House*, p. 86.

<sup>68</sup> Isaac Norris quoted in Pares, *Yankees and Creoles*, p. 8.

<sup>69</sup> Steele, *The English Atlantic*, p. 73.



connections between the mid-Atlantic and the Caribbean.<sup>70</sup> In 1678 Thomas Norris of London traveled to Port Royal, Jamaica, and established a profitable trading enterprise with England and the American colonies. In March 1692 Norris's son Isaac was sent to Philadelphia, presumably to establish trading connections with the Quaker colony.<sup>71</sup> These types of family networks existed beyond Philadelphia and Jamaica. Ship owning by Virginia merchants and captains, for example, encouraged mariners and shipwrights to make the Chesapeake their primary residence. Brothers John and James Bowdoin, Boston mariners, traded with Eastern Shore colonists and found the area appealing enough as a base for their maritime activities to purchase land in Northampton County, Virginia. In 1707 James sold his share of the land to John and returned to Massachusetts while John stayed in Virginia. Their decision to live in two different colonies allowed them to continue their inter-colonial trade without the risks involved in trusting non-family members.<sup>72</sup> Hatfield explains how such connections in Virginia and Barbados attempted to integrate a developing Atlantic market as she successfully explores the role several Barbadian families played in the development of Virginia during the late seventeenth century.<sup>73</sup>

Convincing non-family members to alter their established trading routes proved to be only the first challenge that Dickinson faced. In 1701, Dickinson wrote to Major Charles Hobby that he had 'some trouble to perswade some of the owners to let her [a ship] goe this voyage they being mostly used to the Barbados trade.'<sup>74</sup> He often

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<sup>70</sup> That said, many of the first Pennsylvanians were still supported by English capital, or at least linked with it.

<sup>71</sup> Wulf, 'Of the Old Stock', p. 313.

<sup>72</sup> Hatfield, *Atlantic Virginia*, pp. 55-56.

<sup>73</sup> Hatfield, *Atlantic Virginia*, pp. 86-97.

<sup>74</sup> HSP, JDLB, Dickinson to Major Charles Hobby, 24 April 1701.

commented prior to 1700 about not being able to get freight.<sup>75</sup> Dickinson was also familiar with perils of entrusting goods with unscrupulous captains. During December 1698, Dickinson granted power of attorney ‘at sundry places to pursu and apprehend an offender,’ Daniel Johnson from ‘ye island of burmudas...for those money and goods which he hath carried to a contrary port & there illegally disposed of and taken to his.’ Johnson was supposed to go to Port Royal but instead went to Curacao and then on to Barbados ‘to furnish himself with a cargoe suitable for ye coast of gainy for a load of negroes.’ Johnson originally sailed out of St. Thomas and Dickinson suspected that he might return there. Dickinson sent power of attorney to both Barbados and South Carolina but it is unclear if Daniel Johnson ever answered for his crimes.<sup>76</sup>

Jensen argues that this West-Indian trade emerged as a response to the fact that the ‘dream of finding export staples suitable from the English market...never turned into reality.’<sup>77</sup> West Indies produce proved to be another matter. Dunn suggests that ‘the provision of food and drink posed a major problem for seventeenth-century Englishmen in the West Indies.’ The food crops they were used to in England could not be grown in the Caribbean, for the most part, and those food crops that flourished in the Caribbean were generally unappealing to the English palate. After 1650 or 1660 the Barbadians and Leeward Islanders imported most of their food from England, Ireland, and North America. In Jamaica, however, there was plenty of land for provision crops.

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<sup>75</sup> HSP, JDLB, Dickinson to Alexander Parris, 5 July 1698; HSP, JDLB, Dickinson to Francis Dickinson, 28 July 1698; HSP, JDLB, Dickinson to Richard Dolling, 15 August 1698.

<sup>76</sup> HSP, JDLB, Dickinson to James Antwerpe and Richard Poore, 2 December 1698; HSP, JDLB, Dickinson to Richard Dolling, 5 December 1698; HSP, JDLB, Dickinson to Marmaduke Freeman, 5 December 1698; HSP, JDLB, Dickinson to Capt. James Risbee and Alexander Parris, 2 December 1698.

<sup>77</sup> Jensen, *The Maritime Commerce of Colonial Philadelphia*, p. 7.

Nevertheless, the monied planters in this colony imported a great deal of their food from abroad.<sup>78</sup>

Jamaica's trade with English North America thus developed a healthy reciprocity. Colonial ships brought timber, naval stores, horses, and provisions for molasses, rum, and sugar. The islanders bought vast quantities of imported flour, especially when the Pennsylvania flour and bread trade opened up at the end of the seventeenth century. In a six month period in 1699, Dickinson sold eighty-three casks, 174 half barrels, sixty-six quarter barrels, and nine barrels of flour to some one hundred customers in Port Royal. This was enough to bake bread for the entire population of the island. He also supplied Jamaica with forty-seven barrels of bread, thirty-three hogsheads, five barrels, and three tuns of Pennsylvania beer.<sup>79</sup>

The Philadelphia market, however, was not always kind to neophyte merchants. Initially, Dickinson struggled to establish a firm position in the Philadelphia marketplace. The Philadelphian market was notoriously fickle, poorly positioned, and at some times of the year unreachable to both local farmers and trans-Atlantic merchants.<sup>80</sup> Jensen contends that 'despite William Penn's reported care in choosing its location, the geographical situation of Philadelphia did not help its eventual rise to prominence.' Jensen further suggests that:

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<sup>78</sup> Richard Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves. The Rise of English Planter Class in the English West Indies, 1624-1713* (Chapel Hill, 1972), p. 272.

<sup>79</sup> HSP, Loudoun Papers, Jonathan Dickinson Journal, 1699-1701; Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, p. 274-75.

<sup>80</sup> Boston competed with New York and Philadelphia for maritime dominance in English America. All three ports grew in the six decades before 1740, contending for economic hinterlands producing exportable commodities for West Indian and European markets and also for local markets for English, European, and local manufactures. Steele, *The English Atlantic*, p. 58.

observers generally agreed that the natural situation of Philadelphia for trade was somewhat inferior to that of many of its neighbors. On coming into port, ships had to travel more than one hundred miles up the Delaware River, a journey that involved a long and expensive pilotage.<sup>81</sup>

The harbor itself was not as commodious as those of some other American ports. During winter, moreover, ice normally blocked up the river for three or four more weeks a year. The merchants complained that this seasonal stoppage of their trade came at a time when roads to the city were most passable and when farmers had the leisure to bring their produce to market.<sup>82</sup> Dickinson lamented to one of his business associates during a particularly cold season that ‘we are likely to be shut up with ice’ this winter.<sup>83</sup> Hancock suggests that ‘ice on the Delaware and East Rivers...could bring shipping to a halt in the winter months, causing a “general stagnation of business”, and leave “the price of everything...unsettled”’.<sup>84</sup> Steele argues that ‘Philadelphia had much more trouble with winter ice than other major port’.<sup>85</sup>

After sorting out the local market in Philadelphia and surviving some initial failures in his early trading career, Dickinson embarked, during the stagnant winter months, on a number of short trips back to the Caribbean to take more control of his trading ventures. In May 1699, Dickinson returned to Jamaica, arriving on 4 June 1699. He quickly established himself in Port Royal as a merchant, commencing his trade with Philadelphia. More importantly he borrowed £400 from his father to purchase the sloop,

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<sup>81</sup> Jensen, *The Maritime Commerce of Colonial Philadelphia*, p. 6.

<sup>82</sup> Jensen, *The Maritime Commerce of Colonial Philadelphia*, p. 6.

<sup>83</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Abraham Redwood, 20 October 1717.

<sup>84</sup> Hancock, *Oceans of Wine*, p. 214.

<sup>85</sup> During the period from 1719-1740, Steele suggests that ‘there were only three winters during which Philadelphia was still open to ship traffic by the first of January. Steele, *The English Atlantic*, p. 59.

*Hopewell*.<sup>86</sup> Norris, Dickinson's friend and a West Indian transplant acted as his factor in his absence further solidifying their West Indian and Quaker connections in both the mid-Atlantic and the West Indies.<sup>87</sup>

### **More Problems with Trade**

With more direct control over his merchandising, Dickinson began to prosper in trading to various places around the Atlantic including Madeira, the West Indies, and England.<sup>88</sup>

Around this same time, Dickinson began dealing in logwood from the Bay of Campeche.<sup>89</sup> Although technically illegal, Dickinson actively pursued inter-imperial trade very early in his trans-Atlantic trade. During the first years of the eighteenth century the Philadelphia marketplace, like that of Port Royal, underwent considerable changes; Dickinson adjusted accordingly. Hancock suggests that 'from the Seven Year's War

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<sup>86</sup> HSP, JDLB, Dickinson to Mary Dickinson, 5 June 1699; Horle "Jonathan Dickinson", p. 310.

<sup>87</sup> HSP, JDLB, Dickinson to William Parrott, 3 April 1699 When Dickinson returned to Jamaica he was 'received...very tenderly' by his father how met with him in Port Royal. Dickinson was impressed with how far Port Royal had come since they departed in 1696, 'this place [Port Royal] is mightily enlarged by making of land and buildings.' He also commented on the status of the market as well 'the country produce her is very high...[but]this place [has] noe trade with the Spaniards which is occasioned by the Scotch settlement in the Bay of Durian.' HSP, JDLB, Dickinson to Mary Dickinson, 5 June 1699. Dickinson's father did not seem keen on Dickinson embarking on a trans-Atlantic trading because he was 'importuning [him] to come and settle in Jamaica.' HSP, JDLB, Dickinson to Mary Dickinson 12 June 1699. Dickinson did not remain in Jamaica permanently; he did, however, stay for nearly a year returning back to Philadelphia on 18 May 1700.

<sup>88</sup> HSP, JDLB, Dickinson to Marmaduke Freeman, 25 June 1700. Madeira was a Portuguese island, but the subjects of the king of England dominated its anchorages. Not only were most of the ships trading at the island English, but visits from outward-bound English colonial governors were not uncommon. Refreshment, news, and the opportunity to send home word of their progress were reasons enough to stop at Madeira. Crews of larger ships would have loaded pipes of the island's famous wine, which improved during the sea voyage and was popular in the West Indies. Steele, *The English Atlantic*, p. 24.

<sup>89</sup> HSP, JDLB, Dickinson to Major Charles Hobby, 27 July 1700; HSP, JDLB, Dickinson to Couzen Price, 25 July 1700; HSP, JDLB, Dickinson to Couzen Price, 26 August 1700

onward, American merchants grew more aggressive in “managing” their suppliers.’<sup>90</sup>

Evidently, Dickinson was a half-century ahead of the curve. Dickinson wrote to Anthony Major in the summer of 1700 that ‘the trade of this place [Philadelphia] increases much and great numbers of people come yearly upwards of 500 is come since last winter and several ships expected from Bristol and London with more they are chiefly families.’

Therefore, Dickinson requested goods that he thought would do well in Philadelphia. In the summer of 1698, Dickinson asked both his father and his brother for cocoa.<sup>91</sup> More importantly he had to come up with a steady supply of money or credit and a steady

supply of goods that would be ‘vendable in Philadelphia.’ Dickinson wrote to his family’s factors in London, Thomas Lloyd and William Parrott asking for the ‘proceeds of the sale’ of sugar to come to Philadelphia directly and in the future he requested the what his father remits to England ‘on [Dickinson’s] account unto thee.’<sup>92</sup> As to the goods ‘vendable’ in Philadelphia, Dickinson requested ‘Browne osinbrigs dowlas Cambrick and the kearseys large shallones hose & silk and as much drabdebury as will make a large coat.’<sup>93</sup>

Many times, especially during his first few years in Philadelphia, Dickinson remained at the mercy of the market. John Reynell, Dickinson’s contemporary put the matter generally:

Sometimes our goods fetch 20 [i.e. twenty per cent above cost] sometimes 15  
sometimes 10 sometimes 5 sometimes the same [and] sometimes less then it cost

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<sup>90</sup> Hancock, *Oceans of Wine*, p. 219.

<sup>91</sup> HSP, JDLB, Dickinson to Francis Dickinson, 15 August 1698; HSP, JDLB, Dickinson to Caleb Dickinson, 15 August 1698.

<sup>92</sup> HSP, JDLB, Dickinson to Thomas Lloyd, 22 August 1698.

<sup>93</sup> HSP, JDLB, Dickinson to William Parrott, 22 August 1698.

here I mean clear of all charges therefore the advantage of that trade very much depends on the timing and remittances.<sup>94</sup>

European goods often all came to market at the same time therefore causing problems in selling of certain goods. Dickinson complained that 'European goods are fallen' and as a result he struggled to get rid of four 'gownes & petticoates...all which he could not sell.'<sup>95</sup> He wrote to several of his associates that their goods remained 'mostly unsold' because many of them were 'soe over plenty.' He hoped that the fall and winter would present a 'better opportunity to sell.'<sup>96</sup> The market for textiles tended to be the worst in the summer. Dickinson suggested that 'linnen hat & that is much wanted in this place' but other heavier fabrics were going to 'come to a dull market' because Philadelphia was 'full of coarse goods.'<sup>97</sup> At other times Dickinson lamented that heavier broad cloth was 'out of fashions...[and] under valued.'<sup>98</sup> The summer seemed to be a bad time for other goods coming from Europe as well. Dickinson suggested that Philadelphia was 'fully supplied with European goods' and advised not to send any more.<sup>99</sup> He continued to advise against the importing of European goods in 1701 because they were 'expected to be plenty.'<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> HSP, Reynell Letterbook, John Reynell to M. L. Dicker, 19 June 1731, p. 25 quoted in Pares, *Yankees and Creoles*, p. 139.

<sup>95</sup> HSP, JDLB, Dickinson to Caleb Dickinson, 14 May 1698; HSP, JDLB, Dickinson to Symon Valentine, 30 June 1698.

<sup>96</sup> HSP, JDLB, Dickinson to Mennesah & Benjamin Pereira, 22 June 1700; HSP, JDLB, Dickinson to Aron Lamego, 22 June 1722; Dickinson to Aron Lamego, 9 July 1700.

<sup>97</sup> HSP, JDLB, Dickinson to Aron Lamego, 22 June 1722; HSP, JDLB, Dickinson to William Rogers, 26 June 1700.

<sup>98</sup> HSP, JDLB, Dickinson to Aron Lamego, 19 May 1701.

<sup>99</sup> HSP, JDLB, Dickinson to Jacob Mayle, 9 July 1700.

<sup>100</sup> HSP, JDLB, Dickinson to David Nunez, 31 March 1701; HSP, JDLB, Dickinson to Menasseth & Benjamin Pereira, 31 March 1701.

Other times Dickinson could not get the requested goods or the quality of goods that he received rendered them impossible to market. He wrote that he had not sold ‘one penny’s worth’ of Isaac Gale’s goods especially the hats because they were ‘extream big in the head.’<sup>101</sup> He received complaints about ‘ill fitting habdasherey and hats’ that some shopkeepers suggested to be ‘second hand.’<sup>102</sup> But when Dickinson received quality ‘pantaloons, flannels, and drugetts’ and other wollens they were ‘sold off readily.’<sup>103</sup>

At other times he received damaged goods including a ‘rusty and tarnished’ clock.<sup>104</sup> As a result, Dickinson could be harsh in his criticisms of goods coming from Europe. In October 1716 he complained to John Askew that ‘those leather chairs that came per Richmond [were] such that all man kind [would] condemn.’ These complications suggest that perhaps trans-Atlantic merchants viewed Philadelphia’s young market as an afterthought or that the centre of trade was further south, probably in the West Indies.

In 1698, Dickinson complained to Manuel Bruno that goods were coming to ‘an ordinary market’ and that the bread he received was ‘very fowle and full of weavell.’<sup>105</sup> Several days later Dickinson wrote to William Smith that he was unable to procure the beer he requested.<sup>106</sup> Well into the 1710s, Dickinson continued to receive goods that did not demand a premium in Philadelphia. He complained of rum that ‘ceader or mahogany did culler it to that degree it looked more like claret then rum & a tast of ye wood very

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<sup>101</sup> HSP, JDLB, Dickinson to Isaac Gale, 26 August 1700.

<sup>102</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to John Askew, 6 October 1715.

<sup>103</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Richard Champion, 9 July 1717.

<sup>104</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to George Smith, 29 October 1715; LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Capt. Barnett, 13 December 1715.

<sup>105</sup> Dickinson also struggled to sell ginger during his first years in Philadelphia because it was ‘not desired.’ HSP, JDLB, Dickinson to Manuel Bruno, 2 July 1698.

<sup>106</sup> HSP, JDLB, Dickinson to William Smith, 5 July 1698.



unpleasant.’ Nevertheless, Dickinson was able to sell it at a cut rate because ‘such a great quantity of rum come...in from Barbados.’<sup>107</sup> Dickinson also received wine that ‘doth not prove well.’<sup>108</sup> He wrote to his wine merchant in Madeira, Richard Miles, that ‘its appears to me that some wines from your Island have been from some years past suspected to have been corrupted with other wine not approved & now more freely made mention of & as such are rejected.’<sup>109</sup> Later in the month he requested that ‘four pipes of the best wine’ be sent ‘directly to’ Philadelphia.<sup>110</sup> A year later in July 1719, Dickinson received his ‘4 pipes of wine, all good.’<sup>111</sup> Dickinson probably preferred wines from the ‘Wine Islands’ because they were not considered European by the Navigation Acts and, therefore, could be exported directly to the American colonies whereas Iberian sherries and ports had to go through England.<sup>112</sup>

For Dickinson, good wine was more than a personal preference; he thought it directly impacted his health, because when he ‘lost to pypes of my faune’ it ‘occasioned [him] last winter to drink poor wine which [he] have suffred for since by ye gout believing as “many of friends conjecture to be ye occasion”’ of his aliments.<sup>113</sup> Eventually Dickinson began to advise his West-Indian counterparts to stop sending rum in ‘casks of Mohogany or Ceader’ and ‘put it in good madera pipes of Bristoll Beers h[og]h[ea]ds...ye smaller casks ye better’ the ‘bitterish tast’ makes it unvendable.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Jonathan Gale, 30 April 1715.

<sup>108</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Richard Miles, 28 November 1715.

<sup>109</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Richard Miles, 7 July 1718.

<sup>110</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Richard Miles, 19 July 1718.

<sup>111</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Richard Miles, 20 July 1719.

<sup>112</sup> Steele, *The English Atlantic*, pp. 72-3.

<sup>113</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to John Askew, 8 September 1710.

<sup>114</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Isaac Gale, 13 December 1715.

Dickinson also expressed disappointment in goods he received for personal use. Apparently, longing for Jamaican comfort foods, Dickinson's wife, Mary, ordered cassava bread from her brother Isaac Gale but it did not satisfy her. Dickinson suggested that she was 'dissatisfied in her cassava bread which [was] no small loss to her.'<sup>115</sup> Ultimately, Dickinson had to learn the hard way what would sell in Philadelphia and at what time a year he could get the best price for particular goods. This steep learning curve created many anxious moments for Dickinson. The next generation of trans-Atlantic traders undoubtedly benefited from Dickinson and his contemporaries' early experiences.

A number of goods fared well in the Philadelphia market, especially 'rum, sugar, and molasses' which 'hath been a good commodity here [Philadelphia] since midsummer.'<sup>116</sup> He also speculated to his West Indian partners that rum, molasses, and sugar would continue to sell well in the fall.<sup>117</sup> Yet, even West Indian staples were subject to unfavorable markets. Barbadian merchants particularly concerned Dickinson. He wrote to his brother-in-law, Ezekiel Gomersall, that the 'sugar that came last fall that unsold we had a great quantity from Barbados which glutted our market.'<sup>118</sup> In 1715, Dickinson complained to John Lewis that Philadelphia had a 'miserable market...for rum, sugar & molasses.'<sup>119</sup> The 'dull market' was occasioned by the large influx of foreign goods. Dickinson wrote to inform his brother-in-law, Isaac Gale, that 'most of the Molasses we have is from Sarenam & High Spainola & next Antigua, Nevis, and St.

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<sup>115</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Joseph Gale, 24 April 1717.

<sup>116</sup> HSP, JDLB, Dickinson to Richard Dolling, 28 November 1698.

<sup>117</sup> HSP, JDLB, Dickinson to Isaac Gale, 25 July 1700.

<sup>118</sup> HSP, JDLB, Dickinson to Ezekiel Gomersall, 24 April 1701.

<sup>119</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to John Lewis, 13 December 1715.

Christophers.<sup>120</sup> He also complained that ‘ships from Barbados [were] driving down sugar and rum prices in the Spring and Summer.’<sup>121</sup> Many of these goods prior to Dickinson arrival did not come from Jamaica but from Barbados. Subsequently, merchants and traders were reluctant to alter traditional modes of operation. Dickinson quickly realised he could take advantage of the fact that ‘barbadoes goods are at a great sale here and have risen since the arrival of three vessels from thence.’<sup>122</sup> Slow markets often continued for months at a time. As late as 1716, Dickinson continued to complain that ‘trade [was] slow and money [was] scarce.’<sup>123</sup> The ability of Pennsylvanians to take advantage of the West Indian market, however, indicates the growing interdependence of England’s American colonies.<sup>124</sup>

### **Expanding Trade to Foreign Ports**

Dickinson continually dealt with ‘dull trading,’ ‘bad markets’ and money being ‘extreamly scarce’ in Philadelphia.<sup>125</sup> By the mid-1710s, however, Dickinson was no longer a neophyte merchant battered and broken from months of captivity in Florida. Although Dickinson expanded his trading connections considerably by the late 1710s, he continued to struggle with the uncertainties of international markets, proper supply, and the issues with productivity of his sugar estates. Yet, Dickinson in the proceeding decade had learned how to negotiate these uncertainties.

As Nash suggests the ‘economic fortune’ of Philadelphia was at a nadir around the turn of the eighteenth century. He contends that it was not until 1710, after a virtual

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<sup>120</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Isaac Gale, 13 December 1715.

<sup>121</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to John Lewis, 17 April 1716.

<sup>122</sup> HSP, JDLB, Dickinson to Alexander Parris, 24 November 1698.

<sup>123</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Capt. Barnett, 13 April 1716.

<sup>124</sup> Ned Landsman, ‘The Middle Colonies’, p. 363.

<sup>125</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Capt. Barnett, 13 December 1715.

end of the hostilities between England and France restored foreign markets and reopened trade routes to southern Europe and the West Indies' that economic stability returned to Philadelphia.<sup>126</sup> Conversely, Marcus Rediker suggests that 'war created tangible benefits for many.' He contends that 'they [wars] were, after all, often undertaken to capture new territory and markets'.<sup>127</sup> War, however, disrupted communication and transportation and increased the cost of maritime insurance and shipping. Nevertheless, as early as the spring of 1700, Dickinson, despite the complications of trade during wartime, began exploring the possibility of trading with a number of other European colonies. He wrote to his brother-in-law, Ezekiell Gomersall, to inform him that he was 'willing to runn the risque in a trading venture amongst the Spaniards...if a quick market [does not] present at your port [Port Royal.]'<sup>128</sup> Dickinson 'hoping barrels of flour arrived well in Jamaica' reiterated to his brother that he may 'so adventure some of [his] flour amongst the Spaniards' but he would leave it to Gomersall to do as he saw fit.<sup>129</sup> Apparently uneasy about missing the opportunities of foreign markets Dickinson asked Gomersall to inform him 'if a trade amongst ye French would be lawfull and safe with advantage.' He asked Gomersall to 'procure a Letter of Credit or advice of [a] noted merchant in who [he] might confide.' He figured that the French islands would probably 'want such supplies as this place [Philadelphia] plentifully affords.'<sup>130</sup>

Although European travelers frequently commented on the ubiquity of contraband trade throughout the Atlantic world, few historians have examined inter-imperial

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<sup>126</sup> Nash, *Quakers and Politics*, pp. 253-54.

<sup>127</sup> Marcus Rediker, *Between the Devil and Deep Blue Sea. Merchant Seamen, Pirates, and the Anglo-American Maritime World, 1700-1750* (Cambridge, 1987), p. 34.

<sup>128</sup> HSP, JDLB, Dickinson to Ezekiell Gomersall, 25 June 1700.

<sup>129</sup> HSP, JDLB, Dickinson to Ezekiell Gomersall, 26 June 1700; HSP, JDLB, Dickinson to Ezekiell Gomerall, 8 July 1700.

<sup>130</sup> HSP, JDLB, Dickinson to Ezekiell Gomersall, 9 July 1700.

smuggling in depth. In 1917, Frank Wesley Pitman argued that ‘illegal trade was a permanent feature of colonial commerce during the whole period of restricted trade down to the American Revolution’.<sup>131</sup> More recently, Wim Klooster argues that ‘illicit trade was big business in many parts of the New World.’ He goes on to suggest that ‘illicit trade...in many parts of the New World...contraband trade...overshadowed legal trade.’<sup>132</sup> As he suggests it ‘takes two to smuggle’. Dickinson actively sought several foreign partners during the early eighteenth century. It is important to remember that Dickinson grew up in Jamaica during a period that Nuala Zahedieh characterises as one with a ‘thriving contraband trade.’<sup>133</sup> Jamaica’s clandestine trade with the Spanish colonies got well underway in the first years of English settlement. Essentially, merchants in England began to use Jamaica as their Caribbean entrepôt during the 1680s.<sup>134</sup> Zahedieh’s close examination of contraband trade in Jamaica during the 1680s suggests that nearly half of all ship entering Port Royal proceeded to Spanish colonial markets.<sup>135</sup> Ultimately, Jamaican governors followed a policy of toleration, and so the island attracted merchants of foreign origin or from religious minorities already engaged in clandestine commerce.<sup>136</sup> Therefore, Dickinson, having cut his cloth in this

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<sup>131</sup> Pitman, *The Development of the British West Indies*, p. 190.

<sup>132</sup> Wim Klooster, ‘Inter-Imperial Smuggling in the Americas, 1600-1800’ in Bernard Bailyn and Patricia Denault (eds), *Soundings in Atlantic History. Latent Structures and Intellectual Current, 1500-1830* (Cambridge, 2009), p. 141.

<sup>133</sup> Zahedieh, ‘The Merchants of Port Royal, Jamaica, and the Spanish Contraband Trade’, p. 571.

<sup>134</sup> The Jamaican merchant fleet expanded from forty vessels in 1670 to about one hundred in 1688, about half of which were constantly used in informal trade away from the major ports in the Spanish Caribbean. Klooster, ‘Inter-Imperial Smuggling in the Americas’, p. 159.

<sup>135</sup> Zahedieh, ‘The Merchants of Port Royal, Jamaica, and the Spanish Contraband Trade’, pp. 575-76.

<sup>136</sup> Zahedieh, ‘The Merchants of Port Royal, Jamaica, and the Spanish Contraband Trade’, p. 579.

environment, probably felt little concern for imperial regulations if foreign markets offered considerable profits.

In 1696, Dickinson left Jamaica aboard the *Reformation* carrying with him 1,500 pieces of eight. While most colonies used commodities as currency, Anglo-Jamaicans used coins. Since almost all trade with Spanish colonies was illegal, these coins undoubtedly came to Jamaica illegally.<sup>137</sup> Whether or not Dickinson was engaged in illegal trade beyond his logwood interests in the Bay of Campeche before 1715 is unclear. Nevertheless, Dickinson learned, at a very early age, about the profitability of trade beyond the bounds of the English colonies.<sup>138</sup>

West Indians, particularly Anglo-Jamaican merchants, were particularly interested in trading beyond the bounds of the English colonies. Klooster suggests that illicit trade was ubiquitous during the eighteenth century but he contends that before 1700 ‘very few contacts were established between French and English islands in the West Indies’.<sup>139</sup> By 1715, however, Dickinson had created active trade partnerships in foreign colonies, particularly in Saint Domingue. Following an extended seven-year stay in Jamaica after his father’s death in 1704, Dickinson, his youngest son, John, his first daughter, Mary, and his pregnant wife, left Jamaica for the last time on 27 June 1709 aboard his ironically

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<sup>137</sup> Klooster suggest that ‘although Spanish bottoms were formally forbidden to upload Spanish (New World) products in English, colonies, English law made an exception for any foreign ship laden with bullion. In many cases, therefore, Spanish trade was allowed to proceed. Klooster, ‘Inter-Imperial Smuggling in the Americas’, pp. 145-46.

<sup>138</sup> Zahedieh suggests that ‘trading gains may have made Port Royal the richest merchant community in English North America’. Zahedieh, ‘The Merchants of Port Royal, Jamaica, and the Spanish Contraband Trade’, p. 588.

<sup>139</sup> Klooster, ‘Inter-Imperial Smuggling in the Americas’, p. 162.

named sloop, *Happy Return*. Blown off course near Cuba, a French privateer lurking along the south side of Long Island, Bahamas captured Dickinson's ship.<sup>140</sup>

The French privateer escorted Dickinson and company to Port-au-Paix in northern Saint Domingue, where a Judge, a King's Attorney and a secretary boarded the *Happy Return* and 'seal'd down the Hatches, lest any of the goods should be embezzled, and so the Admiral of France be defrauded of his right.' After a convoluted legal proceeding, during which time Dickinson refused to swear an oath, officials deemed the ship and all its contents a legal prize to be confiscated. After the proceeding, 'they [the French] were kind beyond common Friendship' to Dickinson and his family. The Dickinsons stayed with Judge Danzell and 'were kindly entertained.' Thomas Story, a Philadelphian who accompanied Dickinson on the voyage, spent some time with Colonel Lawrens, who was the Governor of the Fort in Cape Francois, during which time the governor related their condition on this island and the impact of the recent war:

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<sup>140</sup> Like the *Reformation*, the *Happy Return*, sailed under the protection of the *Kingston*, Man of War with a convoy of five other ships. As a result of the 'weather turning bad' they lost sight of the rest of the convoy and made their way toward the Windward Passage. In sight of the Western most part of Hispaniola, they saw an unidentifiable ship that actively pursued them in all their 'various courses.' The *Happy Return* 'put forth English Colours and so had they: but it being so common for Men of their Employ to deceive each other that Way, we could give no Trust to fair Colours on either side.' Ultimately these privateers from Jamaica were looking for French ships to plunder. The English privateers gave them an 'of the Cannel to the East of *Cuba*, in our Road and that there were several of the Enemy's Privateers cruizing, but no of any great Force; and advised us how to steer, in greater Probability to escape them.' The advice, however, proved to be ineffective. The French ship fired one of his guns to 'summon' them and Dickinson's Captain, James Wilkinson, 'being of fighting Principle and his men likewise,' hoisted the English ensign and "returned his Salute.' The *Happy Return*, only having two mounted guns, was no match for the French ship, which advanced quickly and came within 'reach of small arms' and fired upon the *Happy Return*. The captain and the crew of ten men 'soon yielded to her.' The French ship, Captained by Captain Lewey, was a small sloop with four small guns and about 30 men outfitted from 'Martinico.' The French crew promised that they would do no personal harm to them and they 'were very kind all along as we sailed to Port-a-Pee, on the North Side of Hispaniola.'

that Port, with the Fort and Precincts, had been taken by the *English* and *Spaniards*, under the Conduct of Admiral *Benbom*[w]...they had never recovered it, but most People lived very poor: That tho[ugh] they made a little Sugar and Molosses, it was so mean it would hardly sell; and, being altogether confined to the *French* Merchants, they had very little for it, only a little Cloathing, &c. and that at very dear Rates, and had nothing to make Money, which was very scarce.

He continued:

But their Indico, which was very good, did them some more Help; yet, confined to *France* in that also, from whom they had some Flour, but generally musty, and now and then a Prize with Flour, Beef, Pork, &c. but that most of their fresh Provisions were wild Hogs, and Beef from the Island of *Tortuga* (or *Turtles*) about three leagues from that Port.

While in Saint Domingue, Dickinson enjoyed the ‘Liberty to go where [he] pleased.’ During this time Dickinson undoubtedly took notice of the poorly supplied island and in turn may have recognised the considerable opportunities for trade. Dickinson and company remained in Saint Domingue ‘about 45 days’ because ‘it was rare to find any Occasion of Passage, or Correspondence, to any other place, save Old France, or Martinico’. The absence of competing vessels further encouraged Dickinson to engage trade with the island. Eventually, they departed Saint Domingue on a ship bound for Martinique. Upon their departure, Mary Dickinson, who had just given birth to her fifth child, Hannah, ‘was taken ill of a violent Flux, sometimes bloody.’ Dickinson and company eventually found passage to Antigua arriving on 29 September 1709 where they found accommodation with fellow Quaker James [Jonas] Langford. Dickinson, his



children, and his recovering wife eventually arrived back in Philadelphia of 28 March 1710. This was his last voyage on the Atlantic.<sup>141</sup>

By 1715, less than five years later, Dickinson had developed trade relationships with French merchants on Saint Domingue. During the first two decades of the eighteenth ‘smuggling made a qualitative leap’ and Dickinson clearly played a part in this shift. He shipped one hundred casks of flour to ‘Monsieur Gabett’ before he sent his ship on to Jamaica.<sup>142</sup> The British government, however, held different opinions about illicit trade. In 1686, England and France agreed upon a treaty of neutrality promising to abstain from commerce with each other’s possessions in America. But in the years immediately after the War of Spanish Succession, Pitman suggests that ‘northerners had come to regard French markets in the south no longer as mere fields for speculative adventure, but as natural outlets for Northern produce.’<sup>143</sup> Dickinson voiced his concerns about legislation restricting intra-imperial trade in a letter to a relative in Kingston, Joshua Crosby:

wee have lately come & order from ye Lord Justices to prohibit all trade with ye French grounded on a complaint from merchants...of Jamaica under ye penalties of the Treaty of Commerce...made in 1686...which will barr ye Trade with ye French Islands unless ye point can be gained a new the board of trade being

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<sup>141</sup> Thomas Story, *A journal of the life of Thomas Story, containing an account of his remarkable convincement of and embracing the principles of truth as held by the people called Quakers and also his travels and labours in the service of the gospel, with many other occurrences and observations* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1747).

<sup>142</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to ‘Worthy Friend,’ 16 April 1715.

<sup>143</sup> Pitman, *The Development of the British West Indies*, p. 190.

already & all new hands therein which cannot well be expected until a commerce with france is agreed upon.<sup>144</sup>

Dickinson, concerned over the Lord Justices putting the Treaty into force, was forced ‘alter [his] vessels proceeding to Leoganna though to [his] cost...directly to Jamaica.’<sup>145</sup> Dickinson did not give up his hopes to trade to the French at Saint Domingue. A month later, in May 1715, Dickinson asked his brother-in-law, Isaac Gale, if ‘it might be safe and warrantable to send the sloop up to Leogan.’

Dickinson, however, continued to inquire about the bounds of this new movement to enforce the Treaty of Commerce of 1686. He suspected that that law was directed ‘on the Newfound Land Trade’ and that it had not ‘extended on a generall trade with the Islands in ye West Indies.’ Dickinson clearly expressed his frustration with the new policies especially in light of Philadelphia’s trade with Surinam. With ‘an air of injured surprise,’ he exclaimed, ‘we have the trade with Suranam for mellossos why not with the other?’<sup>146</sup> Here again, Dickinson attempted to maneuver around larger forces hampering his trading ventures.

Dickinson continually lobbied his West Indian counterparts to engage in trade with the French because the French West Indian islands, particularly, Saint Domingue, were in ‘a position to purchase English supplies on terms far more attractive than Barbados or Jamaica could offer’.<sup>147</sup> He suggested to his brother-in-law, Ezekiel Gomersall, that of all the foreign trades that carry out trade in the ‘american plantacions’

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<sup>144</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Joshua Crosby, 21 April 1715.

<sup>145</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Lewis Galdy, 23 April 1715.

<sup>146</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Isaac Gale, 2 May 1710; Pares, *Creoles and Yankees*, p. 50-51.

<sup>147</sup> Pitman, *The Development of the British West Indies*, p. 191.

the French were 'industrious enough to all such opportunities.'<sup>148</sup> And despite the increasing regulations on trade with foreign colonies, he continued to 'order his sloop[s] to Leogane.'<sup>149</sup> At other times he complained about 'musty and rotten cacao and suggested if 'good cacao' was cheaper at Leogane to get it there.'<sup>150</sup>

Dickinson hoped that after the death of the French king, Louis XIV, the subsequent 'alteracions in france may change the face of affaires greatly.'<sup>151</sup> He did not, however, wait for such alterations. In December 1715, he sent advice to his trading partner at Leogane:

if ever thy godson shall take his progress this way [to Philadelphia] I shall receive him with all ye tender regards to a son. My daughter make herself on the subject and will endeavour to learn the language of her country laing some claim to the Place of her birth which was when we stayed at Cape Francis.

He continued with directions for his sloop: 'there is on aboard a parcel of Flour...and lumber with some Empty cask for Mallasses....if the vessel not be admitted to land them through any prohibicon in Trade give thy orders for thy vessel to make the best of her way to Jamaica.'<sup>152</sup> Dickinson, however, was keenly aware that what his was doing was illegal and used his correspondence as cover. He instructed his captain, John King, that 'when then come to Leogan with the Endeavour to Speak with this Gentleman should any boat come off to enquire thy Bussiness declare thou hast no other business but to deliver thy packet herein contained & have an answer.'<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Ezekiell Gomersall, 15 August 1715.

<sup>149</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to John Lewis, 13 December 1715.

<sup>150</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to John Lewis, 13 December 1715.

<sup>151</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Capt. Barnett, 13 December 1715.

<sup>152</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Monsieur DeCaux, 14 December 1715.

<sup>153</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to John King, 15 December 1715.

Dickinson thought he had little choice but to trade with the French or other colonies when their traders presented better offers. He lamented to Joshua Crosby that:

Sugars are fallen & Sugar planters must take their chance with their neighbors & come down as others rise. The French have not sold much cheaper then their neighbors but when a commodity is like to be cheap they assign a cause for it as I remember that ye Dutch bought such quantities from India that ye Sugar Interest in our plantations, were like to despaire.<sup>154</sup>

Dickinson continued trading at Leogane regularly perhaps choosing it for its isolation and to avoid regulations at the much larger port, Le Cap. Klooster suggests that being ‘careful to protect their valuable good, the initiators of informal trade often chose to land their merchandise far from the watchful eyes of local officials’.<sup>155</sup> Dickinson was probably also aware that many Jamaican merchants exchanged slaves for sugar and indigo along the isolated southern coast of Saint Domingue.<sup>156</sup> In August 1717, Dickinson shipped 37,000 staves to Jamaica and requested his brother-in-law to provide him with 2,000 gallons of rum and a cask for 4,000 gallons of molasses to be carried ‘up to Leogan’ to be filled.<sup>157</sup> He advised the ship’s captain to ‘take on Sugar & mellases with Indico.’<sup>158</sup> He also requested that ‘some yams and oranges from Leogan[e] [if] one or both may be had.’<sup>159</sup> Over the course next fifteen years, the practice of inter-imperial trade must have grown considerably. In 1733, The Marquis de Fayet, governor of Saint-

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<sup>154</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Joshua Crosby, 14 December 1715.

<sup>155</sup> Klooster, ‘Inter-Imperial Smuggling in the Americas’, p. 142.

<sup>156</sup> Klooster, ‘Inter-Imperial Smuggling in the Americas’, p. 163.

<sup>157</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Joseph Gale, 1 August 1717; LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Cousin Crosby, 2 August 1717.

<sup>158</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Lewis Galdy, 3 September 1717.

<sup>159</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Joshua Crosby, 17 September 1717.

Domingue ‘fretted that he had tried everything to destroy foreign contraband trade but in vain: “I am alone against the whole country”’.<sup>160</sup>

The following year old fears about restrictions from the home government returned. Dickinson suggested to Lewis Galdy that:

Wee have heard that the Trade between us & ye subjects of France in the West Indies are like to be disturbed by our Governments in North America upon instructions from home the government of Virginia we have heard hath made some seizures & proceeded to law but the determination we have not.<sup>161</sup>

Ultimately new restrictions and the old burdens of the Navigation Acts ‘felt like a straightjacket’ to many Anglo-Atlantic traders.<sup>162</sup> Smuggling and illicit trade, as Klooster suggests ‘came naturally to settlers seeking affordable products and easy outlets.’

Dickinson’s opportunism illustrates ‘a new spirit of enterprise that manifested itself in Pennsylvania’ during the early eighteenth century.<sup>163</sup> Similarly, Dickinson’s close friends and occasionally business partners, James Logan and Isaac Norris also concentrated on pursuing new mercantile connections. For example, in 1710 Norris moved quickly to take advantage of a grain shortage in Lisbon. For a year every bushel of wheat he procured was shipped to the Iberian Peninsula. They attempted to trade rum in Newfoundland for fish to be shipped to Spain and Portugal. In 1714, Logan shipped lumber to Leghorn in effort to open up Mediterranean trade routes.<sup>164</sup>

Nevertheless, Dickinson and his Philadelphia counterparts still had to contend with local government’s regulations:

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<sup>160</sup> Klooster, ‘Inter-Imperial Smuggling in the Americas’, p. 144.

<sup>161</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Lewis Galdy, 24 February 1717.

<sup>162</sup> Klooster, ‘Inter-Imperial Smuggling in the Americas’, p. 160.

<sup>163</sup> Nash, *Quakers and Politics*, p. 321.

<sup>164</sup> Nash, *Quakers and Politics*, p. 321.

our country assembly have pusht hard in the merchant Traders especially on non residents laying duties on wines 50/per pipe from place of growth & double from other ports, 12 per tun on all vessalls, 2 per gallon of Rum & Brandy, five pounds per head on Negroes.<sup>165</sup>

Upset about this tax, Dickinson complained to John Askew, ‘our country gentry are for levying taxes upon everyone save themselves not spareing trade in ye Least so that no part of the burden come on their shoulders.’<sup>166</sup> Dickinson further lamented that these laws because he thought they would ‘discourage trade & and we shall be scantly supplied until our laws our repealed.’<sup>167</sup> He suggested the new laws were enacted to ‘mulet the trading men placing ye who support of the government there on & the planting interest of this country doth not pay one penny.’<sup>168</sup>

Subsequently, Dickinson grew tired of contending with all the problems associated with trading. He wrote to Joshua Crosby in April 1717: ‘I must confess my interest in vessels & ye success therein in very discourgeing. If she comes here safe I shall not give myself much more Trouble with her in those new coarses taken.’ He continued, ‘I could have desired an explanation of them butt planters and trading men will stand oppose each other even against a common good.’<sup>169</sup> He further lamented his association with one sloop in particular, *Mary*, to his brother-in-law:

Upon their coming away to have had an account of her being sold would have been more satisfactory ye to have returned. She hath been an untoward vessel and

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<sup>165</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Lewis Galdy, 24 February 1717.

<sup>166</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to John Askew, 24 October 1717.

<sup>167</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to John Lewis, 2 March 1717.

<sup>168</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Joshua Crosby, 29 April 1718.

<sup>169</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Joshua Crosby, 2 April 1718.

Emblem of Mistakes to me which had I foreseen would not have given occasion.

I shall be more cautious for ye future.<sup>170</sup>

Ultimately he concluded ‘as to me sloop if she return’d I am ready to think to sell her here and I shall not concern myself further in vessels then a part leaving the husbandry to those ye can better tend it.’<sup>171</sup> When the ship arrived in Philadelphia he decided to ‘sell or burn the old unhappy sloop or Machine of mischief from first Cast shee shall not deceive me more.’<sup>172</sup> Eventually, Dickinson destroyed *Mary* because ‘she was not thought to be worth Repairs.’<sup>173</sup>

Dickinson’s ambitious political career also affected his trading. He wrote to his brother-in-law, Jonathan Gale, that he ‘sought to have had time more particularly on trade but [had] had been much taken up with publick affairs.’<sup>174</sup> Neither trade nor politics seemed to satisfy Dickinson in his later years. He wrote to John Askew expressing his discontent:

all ye drudergy in a publick station my temper hath made me pray unto ye Publick and yet is unhappy enough not getting an thing there by but I shall if it pleaseth God to spare me retire some distance from the town having boughs about a year since.<sup>175</sup>

Leaving behind Philadelphia and his lifestyle as a merchantman, however, proved to be a considerably difficult task.

## Conclusion

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<sup>170</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Joshua Gale, 31 March 1718.

<sup>171</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Isaac Gale, 28 April 1718.

<sup>172</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Joshua Crosby, 6 June 1718.

<sup>173</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to John Lewis and George Dawes, 2 December 1718.

<sup>174</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Jonathan Gale, 5 July 1718.

<sup>175</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to John Askew, 6 November 1718.

The purpose of this chapter was to unpack the idea that ‘the reality of decentralisation and the power of agency complicate the traditional understanding of states and empires’. By abandoning the idea of the centrality of the mother countries, their rulers, and their institutions, I presented a slightly grittier but more organic Atlantic world. Rather than an Atlantic world engineered from above the heads of its constitute parts, this Atlantic world was constructed from the strands of individual lives and the repercussions of their actions.<sup>176</sup>

Dickinson did not intentionally set out to create an inter-imperial Atlantic marketplace nor did he plan to develop Atlantic-wide institutions or networks. In the face of constant uncertainty, Dickinson actively exhausted every viable opportunity to advance his personal ventures. Pennsylvania colonists, as did their Anglo-Jamaican counterparts, struggled to find their place with the emerging Atlantic world during the beginning of eighteenth century. The international significance of places like Barbados, Boston, and New York waned and Philadelphia and Jamaica rose to prominence. Through this process, people living in theses colonies shaped the patterns of the Atlantic world in significant ways.

Pares argues that ‘West Indian business made an original and independent contribution to the formation of American capital’. He suggests that these traders were ‘jacks of all trades’ and that nearly ‘every North American merchant had something to do with’ trade in the West Indies.<sup>177</sup> Dickinson’s experiences illustrate that entrepreneurship was risky and uncertain. Nevertheless, Dickinson was, for better or worse, willing to shoulder those risks. Dickinson’s creative opportunism and his ability to manage

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<sup>176</sup> Hancock, *Oceans of Wine*, pp. xiii-xxix.

<sup>177</sup> Pares, *Yankees and Creoles*, p. 163.



business that involved four continents, hundreds of business partners and customers, and all the uncertainties of both trading and planting is what makes him useful to understanding the development of the early eighteenth century.

First and foremost, Dickinson was a businessman, a real early-Atlantic entrepreneur. He spent countless hours drafting letters, recounting prices, prospecting markets, managing his customers, his debits and credits, by informing, importuning, flattering, cajoling, demanding, and all the time selling. Dickinson does not necessarily provide a perfect model for how early eighteenth century commerce transpired. Nevertheless, Dickinson was embedded in the institutions of trade of the turn of the eighteenth century Atlantic world. He was created by it but he also helped create it.

Contingency played a vital role in the everyday lives of the Atlantic peoples in the early-eighteenth century. Their ability to deal with the many uncertainties of this period provide the context for understanding how subsequent generations of Anglo-Atlantic peoples thrived. Illegal trade was merely one facet of Dickinson's complex trans-Atlantic commercial web but his experiences illustrate that merchants from 'different empires' created long-lasting economic and cultural ties that defied metropolitan designs. Mercantilists, unable or unwilling to appreciate what Klooster calls the 'artificiality of organizing trade' demanded that the profits of trade be channeled to England. Dickinson and his counterparts routinely ignored 'imperial blue prints' generation after generation as they sought to promote their own individual fortunes.<sup>178</sup> By shouldering the burdens of unstable markets, inconsistent production and supply, threats of piracy, war, weather, and increased regulatory legislation, Dickinson and his contemporaries created a new Atlantic world. In the process they delivered the nascent connective strands of the early-

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<sup>178</sup> Klooster, 'Inter-Imperial Smuggling in the Americas', pp. 179-80.

eighteenth trans-Atlantic marketplace to the many planters and merchants who wove together those strands into the gilded fabric of late-eighteenth century Anglo-Atlantic commercial empire.

Despite all these forces working against him, Dickinson became one of early-Philadelphia's wealthiest merchants. By extension of his commercial success he became one of the colonies most influential political figures. Nash suggests that Dickinson 'might stand as an example of the crystallisation of a colonial elite'.<sup>179</sup> For a quarter of a century his name in Philadelphia was synonymous with mercantile success and perhaps 'no one in the colony had enjoyed such a standard of living in the first three decades of settlement'.<sup>180</sup> The stress of maintaining his family's lifestyle however, took a recognisable toll on Dickinson. His ambition, which propelled him through the so many uncertainties, ultimately brought about his demise. During the eighteenth century, however, Dickinson *lived* the Atlantic world and for us his experiences illustrate the essence of the Atlantic world.

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<sup>179</sup> Nash, *Quakers and Politics*, p. 324.

<sup>180</sup> Nash, *Quakers and Politics*, p. 324.

## CHAPTER 5: NEGOTIATING AN UNCERTAIN ATLANTIC SLAVE MARKET

During the first two decades of the eighteenth century Jonathan Dickinson was Philadelphia's largest single slaveholder and one of the most active slave-traders in Pennsylvania.<sup>1</sup> Dickinson was not alone in the extent of his involvement with slavery nor was he singular as a Quaker who owned slaves in Philadelphia. In fact, Quaker slave ownership in Philadelphia peaked during the first two decades of the eighteenth century.<sup>2</sup> During Dickinson's lifetime almost every substantial merchant, Quaker and non-Quaker, in the city owned slaves.<sup>3</sup> Enslaved Africans were ubiquitous in early Philadelphia. As Ira Berlin contends, 'as urban slavery expanded, slave-ownership became nearly universal among the urban elite and commonplace among the middling sort as well, especially in great port cities'.<sup>4</sup> For early Philadelphians, slavery was a fundamental necessity for labor demands and the construction of a colonial elite identity.

Enslaved Africans in Philadelphia, however, were much more than just status symbols for the Quaker elite. Merchants, urban craftsmen, and farmers who owned mills or carried on large operations had the year-round-long-term demand for additional labor that black bondage could satisfy.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, enslaved Africans engaged in trans-Atlantic, urban, and agricultural servitude based out of Philadelphia and the surrounding

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<sup>1</sup> Dickinson traded enslaved Africans in Pennsylvania from 1697 to 1722. At his height, Dickinson owned thirty enslaved Africans who comprised at least five percent and maybe as much as ten percent of the total enslaved population of Philadelphia. Dickinson may have been the largest single slaveholder in the history of colonial Pennsylvania.

<sup>2</sup> Jean Soderlund, *Quakers and Slavery. A Divided Spirit* (Princeton, 1985), pp. 55-56.

<sup>3</sup> Gary Nash, *Quakers and Politics. Pennsylvania, 1681-1726* (Princeton, 1968), pp. 323-34.

<sup>4</sup> Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone. The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge, 1998), p. 179.

<sup>5</sup> Soderlund, *Quakers and Slavery*, p. 55.

agricultural hinterland. As the century progressed, the concentration of slavery in Pennsylvania moved out of Philadelphia into the surrounding hinterland. Thus, enslaved Africans were everywhere throughout the Delaware River Valley, as well as Philadelphia during the first decades of the eighteenth century. Overall, the workforce remained mainly white and the pattern of wholesale changeover from white European servants to enslaved Africans found in the West Indies was not replicated in Pennsylvania. Yet, by altering the nature of labor in Pennsylvania enslaved Africans contributed greatly to the economic development of the colony.<sup>6</sup> More importantly, an increasing African presence in the colony engendered the autochthonous colonial debate about the morality of slavery.

As early as the late-1680s, a fringe anti-slavery dialogue began within Quaker ranks. Reconciling slave holding with their religious sensibilities proved to be a difficult task for some early eighteenth-century Quakers. Therefore, historians typically associate Pennsylvanian Quakers with the anti-slavery movement. At the turn of the eighteenth century, however, Quakers and non-Quakers alike in Pennsylvania were generally unopposed to the institution of slavery.<sup>7</sup> Ultimately the Quaker anti-slavery movement was not serious movement until well into the mid-eighteenth century. Nevertheless, the interplay between a small contingent of anti-slavery Quakers, a group of prominent Quaker slave-traders, and a considerable number of Quaker slave-owners at the turn of eighteenth century inadvertently set the course for not only slaveholding and the laws that

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<sup>6</sup> The definitive study of Quakers and slavery in Pennsylvania is: Soderlund, *Quakers and Slavery*.

<sup>7</sup> Jean Soderlund suggests that until the 1750s ‘most Friends probably had about the same attitudes on slavery as other colonists: they either owned slaves or saw nothing wrong with their behavior as long as they treated their chattels well’. Soderlund, *Quakers and Slavery*, p. 4.

regulated the institution but also for the growth of an anti-slavery movement in Pennsylvania.

If Quakers, as illustrated below, had not been so heavily invested in owning and trading slaves at the turn of eighteenth century, the campaign against the institution might have developed differently. It was the influx of a considerable number of enslaved Africans that exposed white men and women, who were previously oblivious, to the plight of enslaved Africans.<sup>8</sup> While increasing Quaker involvement in slavery stimulated a small contingent of Friends to lobby more adamantly against the practice of African slavery at the turn of the eighteenth century, most Quakers in Pennsylvania were far more concerned with developing their mercantile and agricultural interests rather than tearing down one of their business's fundamental building blocks, the institution of slavery.<sup>9</sup>

Therefore this chapter argues that Quakers' considerable involvement in African slavery throughout Pennsylvania and the Lower Counties spurred a growing interest in the institution and the Society of Friends' stance on the matter but did very little to deter Quakers from utilising enslaved Africans in their development of Pennsylvania agriculture and commerce. Dickinson's particular involvement with the institution of slavery reveals another element of his pragmatic negotiation of the uncertainties of the early-eighteenth-century Atlantic world. In the process of reconciling and unraveling this significant component of his character, the following analysis examines the complexities of slave trading and slave owning within the Quaker community in Pennsylvania to

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<sup>8</sup> Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, p. 183.

<sup>9</sup> See Soderlund, *Quakers and Slavery*.

illustrate its importance in the development of Philadelphia and its agricultural hinterland.<sup>10</sup>

Dickinson, along with a small cohort of West-Indian Quaker merchants including Samuel Carpenter from Barbados and Isaac Norris from Jamaica, advanced the institution of slavery, set the parameters for the trade, influenced legislation regulating enslaved Africans, and contended with the uncertain labor market in the Delaware River Valley. As a West Indian by birth, Dickinson held few qualms about the institution of slavery; owning and trading enslaved Africans was simply a matter of business for Dickinson.<sup>11</sup> The market for enslaved Africans was relatively small compared to the market in Dickinson and his West Indian counterparts' homeports in the West Indies. Therefore Philadelphia did not require more than the occasional shipload of enslaved Africans. When those shiploads arrived, however, they did not come from Africa directly. The ships almost always came from the West Indies because these men and their extensive

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<sup>10</sup> As Edward Turner suggests, during the first few decades after the founding of Philadelphia, 'it is probable that the Friends owned more slaves than any other class in the colony.' Wax further suggests that 'Quakers were most active in the Pennsylvania slave trade during the period prior to 1730, when Friends made up a larger proportion of the population than they did later and before Quaker attitudes regarding slavery had become fully developed.' Edward Raymond Turner, 'Slavery in Colonial Pennsylvania', *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, 35:2 (1911), p. 142; Wax, 'Quakers Merchants and the Slave Trade in Colonial Pennsylvania', *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, 86:2 (1962), p. 145.

<sup>11</sup> Dickinson engaged his slaves in agricultural development, artisanal crafts, domestic service and rented slaves as contract laborers. His many letters discussing the role of his enslaved Africans throughout his life evidence this. In many letters he comments on his need for enslaved Africans, the economic viability, and his desire to expand his holdings in both Jamaica and Philadelphia through the use of slave labor. See. Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Maria Dickinson Logan Family Papers, Jonathan Dickinson Letterbook, 1698-1701; HSP, MDLP, Caleb Dickinson Correspondence, Francis Dickinson Correspondence, Jonathan Dickinson Miscellaneous Correspondence, Isaac Norris Correspondence, Samuel Preston Correspondence; HSP, Loudoun Papers, Jonathan Dickinson Miscellaneous Incoming correspondence; Library Company of Philadelphia, Jonathan Dickinson Letterbook, 1715-1721 for many examples of Dickinson's enslaved Africans.

mercantile contacts in the sugar islands ensured that enslaved Africans would be delivered to Philadelphia whenever the local market demanded them.<sup>12</sup> Considering the economic importance of enslaved Africans in Pennsylvania, I am arguing that the marketability, supply, quality, and profitability of trading enslaved laborers was more important to Dickinson than any nascent and marginal anti-slavery sentiments expressed by fellow Quakers. Dickinson, as he did with his many other business ventures, simply had to adjust to the uncertainties of the labor market in the Delaware River Valley.

Dickinson and his West Indian cohort grappled with four obstacles in their slave-trading endeavors. First, Dickinson contended with the marginal but growing moral objections of several Quakers toward the institution of slavery. Second, the quality of enslaved Africans shipped from the West Indies was questionable. The poor quality of many of the arriving Africans created a series of issues Dickinson and his fellow slave-traders had to contend with in their business of trading slaves. Third, Dickinson, as in his other endeavors, had to constantly negotiate the unpredictable Philadelphia marketplace. Finally, as an extension of the moral objections, the Quakers, who were largely in control over the government, half-heartedly attempted to enact restrictive legislation that imposed heavy duties on importing enslaved Africans which was apparently more of an annoyance to Dickinson rather than a genuine concern.<sup>13</sup> Despite these issues Dickinson actively imported enslaved Africans in Pennsylvania along with this cornucopia of trans-Atlantic goods.

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<sup>12</sup> Nash contends that the arrival of black laborers in Philadelphia ebbed and flowed in rhythm with a number of factors, including fear or revolts, taxation, and the accessibility of white indentured servants from Europe. Nash, *Forging Freedom. The Formation of Philadelphia's Black Community, 1720-1840* (Cambridge, 1988), p. 9.

<sup>13</sup> These factors, while important, did not seriously threaten to challenge the institution of slavery in Pennsylvania during the first half of the eighteenth century.

## Extent of Slavery in Pennsylvania

At the turn of the eighteenth century, as Gary Nash suggests ‘one in fifteen Philadelphia families owned slaves.’<sup>14</sup> Moreover, nearly half of all Philadelphians who died before 1750 owned enslaved Africans. Of slave-owners from within the wealthiest echelon of Pennsylvania, which was comprised mostly of Quakers, nearly six out of ten held enslaved Africans at the time of their death.<sup>15</sup> In proportion to the total population, slave importations into Pennsylvania reached a height during the period before 1720.<sup>16</sup> Quakers were both the largest importers and consumers of enslaved Africans in Pennsylvania.

A lack of reliable statistical data, however, has handicapped our understanding of slavery in Pennsylvania during the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries. As Nash suggests, ‘the inquiring student finds only the most impressionistic information regarding the number of slaves in the city, the pattern of slave ownership, the use of slaves, and the interplay of demand for black and white bound labor.’<sup>17</sup> Despite this lack of scholarly attention, the institution of slavery was not incidental to the development of

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<sup>14</sup> Nash, *Quakers and Politics*, 278; Nash, ‘Slaves and Slaveowners in Philadelphia’, *William and Mary Quarterly*, 30:2 (1973), p. 226.

<sup>15</sup> Nash, *Forging Freedom*, p. 9.

<sup>16</sup> Soderlund, ‘Black Importation and Migration into Southeastern Pennsylvania, 1682-1810’, *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 133:2 (1989), p. 144.

<sup>17</sup> Nash, ‘Slaves and Slaveholders in Philadelphia,’ 224. In general, historians of colonial Philadelphia have had to rely on the widely varying comments of residents and visitors to estimate the slave population in Philadelphia. In 1722, Governor William Keith suggested that Pennsylvania had few slaves ‘except for a few Household Servants in the City of Philadelphia.’ Twenty years earlier, however, there was cause for concern over the ‘great abuse & Ill Consequence of the great multitude of Negroes who commonly meete together in a Riott & Tumultuos manner on the first days of the week.’ These contradictory statements, for which many other examples exist, have complicated the scholarly attempts to come to a consensus regarding the size of Philadelphia’s and greater Pennsylvania’s slave population. William Keith to Board of Trade, 18 December 1722 quoted in Nash, ‘Slave and Slaveowners in Philadelphia,’ p. 224; Grand Jury Presentment, 18 September 1702, quoted in Nash, *Quakers and Politics*, pp. 278-79.



Philadelphia as an Atlantic port city and slaveholding in Pennsylvania was far more extensive than has generally been believed.<sup>18</sup>

The first student of slavery in Pennsylvania, Edward Turner, suggested in 1911, that ‘it is almost impossible to obtain satisfactory information as the number of negroes in colonial Pennsylvania.’ He did, however, make ‘conjectures’ about the enslaved population: 1,000 in 1700, 2,500 in 1725, and 6,000 in 1750.<sup>19</sup> More recently, Jean Soderlund, utilising probate inventories, mortality statistics, and tax lists, produced the only empirical study of the enslaved population in Philadelphia. Soderlund illustrates that between 1691 and 1730 fewer than 630 slaves lived in the city.<sup>20</sup> During the last decade of the seventeenth century, when Dickinson first arrived in Philadelphia, a scant 213 enslaved Africans comprised ten per cent of the total population of the city.

The first two decades of the eighteenth century, the time when Dickinson was most active in the slave trade, saw a substantial increase in the enslaved population. The increase was in all probability related to the growing need for labor in the surrounding agricultural areas and the influence of newly-arrived merchants with connections to the West Indies, the major area from which enslaved Africans were drawn.<sup>21</sup> Increasing

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<sup>18</sup> Nash, ‘Slaves and Slaveholders in Philadelphia’, p. 225; Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, p. 54.

<sup>19</sup> Turner, ‘Slavery in Colonial Pennsylvania’, p. 143. Turner based his estimates on a reminiscent report published by John Watson that suggested, at the mid-eighteenth century ‘when fairs were held in Philadelphia as many as a thousand negroes sometimes gathered together for carousal and barbaric rejoicing. Tuner, ‘Slavery in Colonial Pennsylvania’, p. 149; Nash, ‘Slaves and Slaveowners in Colonial Philadelphia’, p. 224; Soderlund, ‘Black Importation and Migration’, p. 146.

<sup>20</sup> Over the same period, Gregory O’Malley has estimated that 1,695 enslaved Africans were important into Pennsylvania, Delaware, and New Jersey from the Caribbean. Gregory O’ Malley, ‘Beyond the Middle Passage: Slave Migrations from the Caribbean to North America’, *William and Mary Quarterly*, 66:1 (2009), p. 161.

<sup>21</sup> West Indian planters arriving prior to 1730, brought along their ideas regarding slavery along with enslaved Africans to help support their families, agriculture, and trade.

nearly 200 percent in the first twenty years of the eighteenth century, the slave population by 1720 had reached at least 620 individuals who comprised more than fifteen per cent of the total population.<sup>22</sup>

While these numbers are substantially lower than Turner's estimates or other contemporary observations that suggested a much higher number of enslaved Africans in Pennsylvania, they do reveal that slaveholding increased during the first two decades of the eighteenth century despite a number of obstacles working against the importation of enslaved Africans into Pennsylvania.<sup>23</sup>

### **Early Opposition**

Much of the scholarship on slavery in colonial Pennsylvania emphasises the Quaker influence on the development of an anti-slavery movement that reached its peak during the years surrounding the American War of Independence.<sup>24</sup> Thomas Drake's, *Quakers and Slavery in America*, published in 1950, was, for many years, the standard text

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They also came with ready-made contacts with family, friends, and Friends in the West Indies who were all involved in the institution of slavery. Pennsylvania businessmen quickly saw the economic advantage of obtaining enslaved Africans over white servants, which they employed side by side. Wax, 'Negro Resistance to the Early American Slave Trade', *The Journal of Negro History*, 51:1 (1966), p. 12.

<sup>22</sup> Soderlund, 'Black Importation and Migration', p. 147; Nash, *Forging Freedom*, p. 9. Berlin also suggests that by the 1740s fifteen per cent of all workingmen in Philadelphia were enslaved Africans. Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, p. 179.

<sup>23</sup> Contemporary visitors regularly overstated the size of black populations in the colonies. South Carolina was commonly thought to be ninety per cent black, rather than sixty per cent, partly because of the high visibility of black workers and their concentration in certain areas. Nash suggests that 'living in hundreds of different households rather than segregated quarters, Philadelphia's slaves resorted to the city's public spaces for social interaction after the day's labor was done. These 'tumultuous gatherings' probably contributed to the overestimation of the number of enslaved Africans living in Philadelphia. Nash, *Forging Freedom*, p. 14.

<sup>24</sup> For a historiographical review covering scholarship from 1901 to 1974, see J. William Frost, 'The Origins of the Quaker Crusade Against Slavery: A Review of Recent Literature', *Quaker History*, 67:1 (1978), pp. 42-58.

accounting American Quakers' attitudes toward slavery.<sup>25</sup> In 1963, Sydney James argued in *A People Among Peoples: Quaker Benevolence in Eighteenth-Century America*, that the Quaker movement against slavery could not be divorced from other charitable impulses and reforms.

Later in the 1960s, Darold Wax complicated the exploration of Quakers and anti-slavery by illustrating that Quaker merchants in early Pennsylvania had few qualms about participating in the slave trade and would have imported more enslaved Africans if it had proved to be profitable.<sup>26</sup> Wax further suggested that Quaker thought on slavery was a slowly developing process that passed through several stages. At first, the Society of Friends 'cautioned its members against importing' enslaved Africans into Pennsylvania. Second, and sometime later, Quakers were 'encouraged not to purchase' enslaved Africans imported by others. Third, the Society of Friends 'sought to end slaveholding' amongst members. Finally, the Society of Friends began advocating for the ending of slavery as an institution.<sup>27</sup> Kristen Block, in a recent article, suggests 'the debt that Pennsylvania's development owed to Quakers who were enmeshed in slave economy and could not—despite their faith's insistence on spiritual equality—escape the immutable realities of their world.' She further suggests that Quaker's 'economic status...[did not make] them amenable to radical experiments in social leveling.'<sup>28</sup> Moreover, Manning

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<sup>25</sup> Thomas Drake, *Quakers and Slavery in America*, (New Haven, 1950.)

<sup>26</sup> Wax suggests, however, that 'Quaker attitudes regarding slavery...were formed and crystallized at a time when the Pennsylvania Negro trade was possessed of somewhat peculiar characteristics'. Wax, 'Quaker Merchants and the Slave Trade in Colonial Pennsylvania,' p. 144.

<sup>27</sup> Wax, 'Quakers Merchants and the Slave Trade in Colonial Pennsylvania', p. 144.

<sup>28</sup> Kristen Block, 'Cultivating Inner and Outer Plantations: Property, Industry, and Slavery in Early Quaker Migration to the New World', *Early American Studies*, 8:3 (2010), p. 542.

Marable argues that ‘early Quaker anti-slavery protestors did not generally attack racism or the institution of slavery itself, but condemned the trade of blacks, as a blatant violation of traditional business ethics.’<sup>29</sup> These more nuanced arguments that highlight an evolution of Quaker thought and the economic arguments of slavery stand up firmly against scholarship that suggests moral objections to slavery were fundamental in hampering Quaker involvement in slavery.

It is, therefore, instructive to examine the origins of anti-slavery among Pennsylvania Quakers to illustrate how the initial anti-slavery positions had little impact on Quaker involvement in slavery. First, Quaker anti-slavery was a minority opinion during the late seventeenth century and early eighteenth century that garnered very little attention from either the Monthly or Yearly Meeting and its members. Second, the minority opinion, for the most part, did not suggest much beyond a blanket statement against slavery and rarely offered alternatives to African slavery. Third, in response to sentiments against slavery, the Meeting did very little beyond making suggestions against slavery and generally deflected responsibility for regulating slavery or the slave trade. Fourth, and most importantly, the following examples illustrate that many men who either voiced an opinion against slavery or supported an opinion against slavery were slave-holders themselves and made no effort to free their slaves and therefore should not be considered as adamantly anti-slavery. In effect, slavery, as it was for Dickinson, was simply a matter of business for many Quakers, even those Quakers who voiced a tacit objection to it.

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<sup>29</sup> Manning Marable, ‘Death of the Quaker Slave Trade,’ *Quaker History*, 63:1 (1974), p. 17.

As early as 1688, however, some members of the Society of Friends began to express their ideas against slavery.<sup>30</sup> In the first known protest against slavery by a religious body in the English colonies, four members of the Germantown Meeting drafted an antislavery tract to be presented at their Monthly Meeting. ‘The Germantown Protest,’ drafted by Francis Daniels Pastorius, and signed by Garret Hendericks, Derick Op den Graeff, and Abraham Op den Graeff, is now regarded as an important document in the beginning of American anti-slavery. At the time, however, these four men had taken an unpopular stance. ‘The Germantown Protest’ circulated within the Quaker community as a manuscript but garnered little interest and was never published. Christian Quakers, a splinter group founded by the schismatic Quaker George Keith, wrote a similar protest. Keith has been largely credited with writing the piece. Katherine Gerbner suggests that the *Exhortation and Caution to Friends concerning Buying or Keeping of Negroes*, was both ‘unpopular and lost credibility within the orthodox Philadelphia Quaker community because it became part of a polemical print war that George Keith was waging against the orthodox Quakers.’<sup>31</sup> Both of these documents attacked slavery on moral and practical grounds and argued that Quakers should forbid slavery.

The Germantowners submitted their protest to the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, where the plan was rejected for having ‘so General a Relation to many other P[a]rts.’ The *Exhortation*, on the other hand, was not even honored with a dismissal in the Yearly

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<sup>30</sup> For a review of Quaker publishing against slavery see, J. William Frost, ‘Quaker Antislavery: From Dissidence to Sense of the Meeting’, *Quaker History*, 101:1 (2012), pp. 13-33.

<sup>31</sup> Katherine Gerbner, ‘Antislavery in Print: The Germantown Protest, the “Exhortation”, and the Seventeenth-Century Quaker Debate on Slavery’, *Early American Studies*, 9:2 (2011), p. 552.

Meeting.<sup>32</sup> That same year, however, the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting advised Friends not to buy slaves except for the purpose of freeing them. No penalty for violation of this provision was provided.<sup>33</sup> Also in 1696, the Yearly meeting, prompted by knowledge that Quakers were participating in the slave trade, advised ‘that Friends be Careful not to Encourage the bringing in of any more Negroes’ after William Southeby and Cadwalder Morgan demanded that Friends ban the importation of slaves and the promotion of Quakerism among slaves already living in Pennsylvania.<sup>34</sup>

In 1698 two Quakers, Pentecost Teague and Robert Pile, both wrote separate anti-slavery tracts. Pile urged that quarterly meetings should have authority to free slaves if they embraced the ‘true faith.’ Pile, therefore, suggested that Quakers instruct enslaved individuals to read and to educate them in Quakers principles.<sup>35</sup> Essentially, Pile expressed the same notions of the nature of the slave trade to the Concord, Pennsylvania Monthly Meeting as the Germantown Quakers. Pile argued that slavery was an evil because it violated the Golden Rule. More importantly, he declared that the trade of slaves was an evil because it was based on stealing men.<sup>36</sup> Pile’s objections evidently did not garner much attention nor was he able to impart his anti-slavery sentiments to his

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<sup>32</sup> Gerbner, ‘Antislavery in Print,’ p. 553.

<sup>33</sup> Herbert Aptheker, ‘The Quaker and Negro Slavery’, *The Journal of Negro History*, 25:3 (1940), p. 337.

<sup>34</sup> Craig W. Horle ‘William Southeby’, in Craig W. Horle, Marianne S. Wowocek (eds), *Lawmaking and Legislators in Pennsylvania. A Biographical Dictionary, 1682-1709*, (Philadelphia, 1991), p. 684.

<sup>35</sup> Henry J. Cadbury, ‘An Early Quaker Anti-Slavery Statement’, *Journal of Negro History*, 22:4 (1937), pp. 488-93.

<sup>36</sup> Marable, ‘Death of the Quaker Slave Trade’, p. 26.

immediately family. When Pile's son, William, died in 1734 he left as part of his estate 'A negro Woman & boy' valued at £50.<sup>37</sup>

In 1698 Teague presented a paper to the Philadelphia Monthly Meeting:

relating to the selling of Negroes at the publick Markett place & Outcry, and it is the sense of this meeting, that friends ought not to sell them after that manner, and it is further agreed that friends...write to friends of the monthly meeting in Barbados to desire them to acquaint friends that they forbear sending any negroes to this place, because they are too numerous here.<sup>38</sup>

Two months later a group of Friends sent a letter to the Barbados meeting suggesting at the 'request of our said meetings that no more negroes may bee sent to this River to friends or others.'<sup>39</sup> Nine Friends signed this letter but only one, William Southeby, was vehemently anti-slavery. In fact, four of the nine, Thomas Masters, Anthony Morris, Samuel Carpenter, and James Fox, collectively owned at least seventeen slaves. Another signer, John Jones, had lived in Barbados and probably at one point in his life also owned slaves. Pentecost Teague, the Friend who suggested sending the letter to Barbados, also owned at least one slave. The Barbadians were unlikely to receive the letter with much enthusiasm as large slave owners themselves.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Horle, 'Clement Plumsted', in Craig W. Horle, Joseph S. Foster, and Jeffrey L. Scheib (eds), *Lawmaking and Legislators in Pennsylvania. A Biographical Dictionary, 1710-1756*, (Philadelphia, 1997), p. 851.

<sup>38</sup> Minutes of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting and Minutes of Philadelphia Monthly Meeting quoted in Wax, 'Quaker Merchants and the Slave Trade', p. 147; Minutes of the Philadelphia Monthly Meeting quoted in Cadbury, 'Another Early Quaker Anti-Slavery Document', *The Journal of Negro History*, 27:2 (1942), p.211.

<sup>39</sup> Cadbury, 'Early Quaker Anti-Slavery Document', p. 212.

<sup>40</sup> Richard Dunn identified fifty-eight Quakers who were living in Barbados in 1680. These people came from many strata of white society and all but four were slaveholders collectively owing more than 1,600 enslaved Africans. Six owned more

Years later, in 1711, after the persistence of William Southeby, the Yearly Meeting renewed its advice of 1696 that Friends should be careful not to encourage the bringing of any more enslaved Africans into the colony but again provided no restrictions against the practice.<sup>41</sup> The Meeting, however, directed all merchants and factors to ‘write to their correspondents to discourage them from sending any more’ enslaved Africans.<sup>42</sup> Southeby’s passion on the issue, however, was not generally shared by the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, which consistently opposed his efforts to end Quaker slave-owning. Southeby was undoubtedly a singular radical during a time when many Quakers saw nothing wrong with African slavery.

In 1712 when the Yearly Meeting, under pressure from Chester Quakers, proposed asking advice of the London Yearly Meeting on the slavery question. Southeby strongly protested, believing that the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting should resolve the issue itself. When the London Yearly Meeting failed in 1714 to take a firm stance against slavery, Southeby, unconcerned about the ‘frowns or displeasure of any’ that opposed him, issued a paper calling upon the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting to set an example. The Meeting did in fact set an example when in April 1716 they called on Southeby to condemn himself for publishing and dispersing a paper censuring Friends of the Yearly Meeting for their refusal to support him. Although Sotheby issued an

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than one hundred slaves apiece. Richard Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves. The Rise of the Planter Class in the English West Indies*, (Chapel Hill, 1972), pp. 102-06.

<sup>41</sup> William Southeby almost singularly carried the anti-slavery torch for much of the first two decades of the eighteenth century. Southeby often stressed that Friends maintain their spiritual and moral priorities.

<sup>42</sup> Minutes of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting quoted in Wax, ‘Quaker Merchants and the Slave Trade,’ p. 156; Cadbury, ‘Early Quaker Anti-Slavery Document’, pp. 212-13.



unsatisfactory paper of self-condemnation, he remained in good standing until November 1717, when he again was ordered to condemn his behavior.<sup>43</sup>

Other Quakers, especially those who attended the Chester Meeting were concerned about slavery also. In 1715, John Blunston, Caleb Pusey, John Wright, and Nicholas Fairlamb addressed the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting requesting that all Friends cease importing, buying, and selling slaves.<sup>44</sup> Ironically, like Pile, Blunston's anti-slavery sentiments did not carry over to his descendents. His son, Samuel Blunston, a planter in Lancaster County, was one of Pennsylvania's largest slave owners. At his death, Blunston owned at least fifteen slaves.<sup>45</sup> Another Chester County Quaker, Caleb Cowpland, who served on a committee to review and amend the epistle against the 'purchasing of Negroes,' which already advised those Quakers who already owned them, at his untimely death owned 'A young Negroe Girl about 7 or 8 years of age.'<sup>46</sup> The purpose of this preceding anti-slavery discussion was to illustrate that even Quakers who expressed an aversion to slavery participated in slavery at one point or another. Those who did not express anti-slavery sentiments, as well as those who did may have very well purchased a portion of their enslaved Africans from fellow Quakers like Samuel Carpenter, Isaac Norris, James Claypool or Dickinson.

### **Trading Slaves**

Ultimately, these minority opinions grew out of the fact that Quakers were involved in the slave trade from the very beginning of English settlement in the Delaware River

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<sup>43</sup> Horle, 'William Southeby', in *Legislators and Lawmakers*, 1682-1709, p. 685

<sup>44</sup> Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Minutes quoted in Joseph s. Foster, 'John Blunston', in *Legislator and Lawmakers*, 1682-1709, p. 224.

<sup>45</sup> Horle, 'Samuel Blunston', in *Legislators and Lawmakers*, 1710-1756, p. 230.

<sup>46</sup> Horle, 'Caleb Cowpland', in *Legislators and Lawmakers*, 1710-1756, pp. 290-92.

Valley.<sup>47</sup> In late November 1684, just three years after the first Quakers arrived in Pennsylvania, a Bristol ship, *Isabella*, arrived with 150 enslaved Africans. William Frampton, a Quaker, negotiated the sale of the enslaved Africans, which took him ‘only a few days.’ Nash suggests that Quaker settlers, many of whom were eager for laborers to clear land and erect houses, so eagerly snapped up the newly arrived Africans that ‘most of the specie they brought to Philadelphia from England departed with the *Isabella*’ the next spring.<sup>48</sup>

Large importations of enslaved Africans, directly from Africa, however, were not the norm during the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries. Almost all of the enslaved Africans, who arrived in Pennsylvania before 1730 arrived with their owners or were shipped from the West Indies in small lots of two or three.<sup>49</sup> They were sent

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<sup>47</sup> Friend William Frampton, a merchant and operator of a ‘Brew house and Bake house’ in Philadelphia, was involved in the slave trade as early as 1684. Wax, ‘Quakers Merchants and the Slave Trade in Colonial Pennsylvania’, p. 147.

<sup>48</sup> Gary Nash, *Forging Freedom*, p. 8. The more significant importance of this shipment, as Jean Soderlund points out, is that the introduction of these 150 enslaved Africans greatly altered the demographic landscape of the colony. Soderlund suggests that the enslaved Africans represented three percent of the colony’s total population of 5,000 inhabitants. Furthermore, if Philadelphians purchased the enslaved Africans exclusively they would have comprised thirteen percent of the city’s population of 1,150 inhabitants in 1684. Soderlund, ‘Black Importation and Migration into Southern Pennsylvania’, pp. 144-45.

<sup>49</sup> Dickinson brought ten enslaved Africans with him when he departed Jamaica in 1696: five women, four men, and a boy. The enslaved individuals included, Peter, London, Jack, Cesar, Cajoe, Hagar, Sarah, Bella, Susanna, and Quensa. He also brought along an enslaved Indian girl, named Venus, who died en route from Jamaica to Florida. Exactly how many slaves the entire Dickinson family owned prior to 1700 is unknown. Considering Dickinson left with ten individuals, his father and brother were left to manage two sizable sugar plantations in Jamaica, and evidence from the 1710s demonstrates that Dickinson bought enslaved Africans in lots of thirty or so, it seems reasonable to suggest that they collectively held at least one hundred slaves. It seems likely that Dickinson intended for his ten slaves to serve his family and the development of a plantation in Philadelphia. Dickinson, however, did not arrive in Philadelphia with ten slaves. Four of the ten, Jack, Cesar, Quensa, and Cajoe all died in Florida from exposure on the final approach into St. Augustine. Dickinson reported in the spring after

northward at the direct request of Pennsylvania residents for their own personal use, or on consignment to Philadelphia merchants for the purposes of sale. By and large, Dickinson, along with several other West Indian merchants dominated the slave trade in colonial Pennsylvania.<sup>50</sup> Along with Dickinson prominent Quakers like Samuel Carpenter from Barbados, Isaac Norris from Jamaica, James Claypoole from London, but with connections to Barbados, and several others utilised their extensive mercantile connections in the Caribbean to supply the Philadelphia market with enslaved Africans whenever the market demanded labor.

Gregory O'Malley contends that historians have underestimated how many slaves came into North America via the Caribbean especially in undersupplied colonies.<sup>51</sup>

Philadelphia was certainly an undersupplied market. O'Malley further suggests that Jamaica and Barbados were the chief suppliers of enslaved Africans for the inter-colonial

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his first winter that he had lost 'some of [his] Negroes by sickness.' He suggested to his father that they 'have all been sickly & very chargable this winter & some dead, I have but three left & one of them taken ill with distemper two or three days past the 2 that are well is London & Bell.' Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Maria Logan Family Papers, Jonathan Dickinson Letterbook, Dickinson to Cozen Price, 16 April 1698; HSP, JDLB, Dickinson to James Pinnick 21 April 1698; HSP, JDLB, Dickinson to Francis Dickinson, 21 April 1698.

<sup>50</sup> Berlin has suggested that for the neighboring colony of New York, that during the first three decades of the eighteenth century for every one slave that arrived directly from Africans, three arrive from the West Indian slaves in the colony. Pennsylvania, with potentially more connections to the West Indies and fewer total slaves, may have had a higher percentage of former West-Indian slaves. Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, p. 49.

<sup>51</sup> The relative significance of Caribbean sources for North American slaves vary. Some historians—especially those working prior to the rigorous quantification of the transatlantic trade and relying largely on anecdotal accounts from the early years of the forced migration—argue that Caribbean markets became important suppliers of slaves in North America. In contrast many slave trade studies ignore intra-American slave movements altogether. O'Malley discusses, at length, the various strands of this historiography in O'Malley, 'Beyond the Middle Passage', pp. 125-172.

trade to North America<sup>52</sup> Ultimately, inter-colonial slave trading occurred for a variety of reasons. Most simply, trans-Atlantic traders did not supply African laborers to all ports with demand. Overlooked by trans-Atlantic traders, places like Philadelphia relied more on inter-colonial trade for slave imports.<sup>53</sup>

Inevitably there were problems associated with the Pennsylvania slave market in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Despite problems with marketability, however, inter-colonial slave traders actively continued to import enslaved Africans because there was a high demand for slave labor in the developing colony. The desire for labor in both town and countryside spurred the development of the slave trade despite some anti-slavery sentiments and the generally poor quality of slaves arriving in Philadelphia. Dickinson and Isaac Norris sometimes expressed concerns over their involvement in the slave trade but, as this section illustrates, despite some economic disadvantages their involvement continued because of the considerable potential for profit.

Shortly after arriving in Philadelphia Dickinson began trading slaves.<sup>54</sup> Almost immediately, Dickinson and Norris both learned that dealing in small groups of slaves, and permitting the prospective purchaser first-hand and careful scrutiny of individual slaves, carried with it distinct disadvantages for the slave trader.<sup>55</sup> Dickinson and Norris

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<sup>52</sup> O'Malley, 'Beyond the Middle Passage', p. 130.

<sup>53</sup> O'Malley, 'Beyond the Middle Passage', pp. 133-34.

<sup>54</sup> Dickinson first documented slave trade occurred in the spring of 1698, when Dickinson traveled to New York and brought back an enslaved African. Dickinson wrote to his brother, Caleb, that the 'negro man [he] brought from New York either shall sell him ye full opportunity that present.' Dickinson wrote to his mother a month later to inform her that a 'negro man, Prince' remained unsold at £40.<sup>54</sup> HSP, JDLB, Dickinson to Caleb Dickinson, 29 July 1698; HSP, JDLB, Dickinson to Isaac Gale 20 November 1719; HSP, JDLB, Dickinson to Mary Dickinson, 15 August 1698.

<sup>55</sup> Wax, 'Negro Resistance to the Early American Slave Trade', p. 13.

occasionally expressed reservations over the business of trading slaves. Their reservations were not based on moral objections to slavery; rather, they complained about the marketability of the enslaved Africans. Both Norris and Dickinson wrote to their West Indian counterparts complaining about the slave-market in Philadelphia. Dickinson wrote to his brother-in-law, Isaac Gale, in the summer of 1700, expressing the common disagreement that existed between the West Indian shipper and the Philadelphia buyer: ‘a[bou]t the Negroes...as to Jack both I and Isaac [Norris] have Endeavored to make Sale of him—but Cannot get the Money to answer thy Vallue of £45 here. The boy Carro...is not Soe likely for a Market.’<sup>56</sup> Norris expressed similar concerns to Richard Sleigh a year later:

Ye Negro woman being bigg w[i]th child is not ready for sale—I have offer’d her to several & hitherto hold ye price £40 for I think her worth it—the boy I have not yet gott a Mastr. for—There is here Generally 5 or £10 Difference between offering to sell & wanting to buy a Negro.<sup>57</sup>

The residents of Pennsylvania throughout the eighteenth century were confronted with an insufficient labor supply and were willing to purchase ‘good’, ‘high-quality,’ or ‘likely’ enslaved Africans but the situation was not so critical as to force them to buy ‘refuse’ slaves. As Dickinson suggested slave purchasers harbored no illusions about the quality of enslaved Africans dispatched from the West Indies. Norris summarised the matter with precision when reporting to his niece in Jamaica: ‘thou mentions thy

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<sup>56</sup> Dickinson to Isaac Gale, 25 June 1700 quoted in Wax, ‘Quaker Merchants and the Slave Trade’, p. 149.

<sup>57</sup> Isaac Norris to Richard Sleigh, 20 May 1701, quoted in Wax, ‘Quaker Merchants and the Slave Trade’, p. 149.

Spouse's purpose of Sending more Negroes, to Shew they are a Sort of Mdze Hazardous & rarely profitably to ye owner, and Seldom pleasing to factors.'<sup>58</sup>

The quality of slaves that reached Dickinson in Philadelphia was the fundamental problem. Wax suggests that there 'could be little doubt that most of the slaves transported from the West Indies and consigned to the Philadelphia merchants were of poor quality.' Extensive evidence suggests that many enslaved Africans coming into Philadelphia island planters termed as 'refuse' or 'waste slaves' and undesirable for plantation labor. Many slaves sent to Dickinson and Norris suffered from yaws, stomach disorders, distemper, and the flux. Oftentimes women were pregnant, and therefore difficult to sell, while others were in such poor health that they died shortly after their arrival in Pennsylvania.<sup>59</sup>

The poor quality of the enslaved Africans received in Philadelphia amplified and accentuated various other problems faced by the factor, many of which were related to the additional expenses associated with receiving and attempting to sell slaves in ill-health.<sup>60</sup> In the summer of 1700, Dickinson wrote his brother-in-law, Ezekiel Gomersall, one of the largest slave owners in Jamaica, about a 'negro consigned on James Del Castello,' who died shortly before arriving in Philadelphia for which Dickinson had to pay the fifteen-shilling burial costs.<sup>61</sup> If slaves did not die shortly after arriving they were still oftentimes sickly. Dickinson wrote to Enoch Stephenson about a group of 'negro

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<sup>58</sup> Isaac Norris to Prudence Moore, 8 December 1731, quoted in Wax, 'Quaker Merchants and the Slave Trade' p. 153.

<sup>59</sup> Wax, 'Quaker Merchants and the Slave Trade', pp. 151-52.

<sup>60</sup> A recurring requirement was that individual slaves were given over to a doctor's care. Wax, 'Quaker Merchants and the Slave Trade', p. 153.

<sup>61</sup> Del Castillo was the agent for the Spanish Crown and a lager purchaser of enslaved Africans in Jamaica. HSP, JDLB, Dickinson to Ezekiell Gomersall, 14 June 1700; HSP, JDLB, Dickinson to Ezekiell Gomersall, 25 June 1700.

women' who 'laine on [his] hand all winter' that he 'could not gett any person to offer anything' because they 'hath been sickly.' To make matters worse, Dickinson complained that 'whenever I had any to veine her she would make such faices & complaints as would prevent their proceeding further.'<sup>62</sup> Any slave who failed to sell quickly was a financial burden on the merchant who was obliged to feed and care for them.<sup>63</sup>

Dickinson continued to receive sick and lame enslaved Africans throughout the 1710s.<sup>64</sup> In 1719, he wrote to Francis Moore explaining that of the two enslaved Africans he received on consignment, one was 'very sick and in some time dyed.' The other 'had a bad ulcerated leg...and after a he was gott well' he was sold of the Lower County man for thirty pounds on bond.<sup>65</sup> Dickinson continued to complain about losing slaves to disease. He wrote to one relative in 1715 about losing slaves to a 'malignant feavor' and

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<sup>62</sup> Library Company of Philadelphia, Jonathan Dickinson Letterbook, 1715-1721, Dickinson to Enoch Stephenson, 21 April 1714/15.

<sup>63</sup> Wax, 'Quaker Merchants and the Slave Trade', p. 153. While the women might have been actively trumping up their illnesses to avoid being sold, the longer enslaved Africans remained unsold the higher the cost of maintaining them would rise. The holding period could be quite long as in 1715 when Dickinson referred to a parcel of enslaved Africans that were on his 'hands a Yeare.' LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to John Bessiwick, 26 April 1715.

<sup>64</sup> Susan E. Klepp, 'Seasoning and Society: Racial Differences in Mortality in Eighteenth-Century Philadelphia', *William and Mary Quarterly*, 51:3 (1994), p. 478. While quality was generally the number one concern, rapid sale was further hampered when slaves arrived in Philadelphia during winter. In 1715, Dickinson wrote to his brother informing him that the enslaved Africans he sent from Jamaica 'have been on hand most of this winter.' There was, to begin with, less demand for labor during the off-season. Moreover, the danger of Philadelphia's cold climate concerned prospective purchasers. Both Norris and Dickinson periodically reminded their West Indian counterparts that enslaved Africans should not come to port in the months from October to March. Such warnings proved ineffective as newly arrived enslaved Africans continued to die from the extreme cold or remain unsold until the coming spring. Wax, 'Quaker Merchants and the Slave Trade' p 153. LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Caleb Dickinson, 2 May 1715.

<sup>65</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Francis Moore, 18 November 1719.

to his brother-in-law, Jonathan Gale, that ‘most all our Negroes was taken with this distemper of which many of all sort were removed.’<sup>66</sup> While time in the West Indies would provide an introduction to life in English colonies and time to adjust to the disease environment, many enslaved Africans were just as unprepared as their white West-Indian counterparts for the sharpness of a mid-Atlantic winter.

While most historians suggest that Africans and Europeans faced similar risks to life and health in Philadelphia, Susan Klepp argues that enslaved Africans ‘faced substantially higher risk of death in Philadelphia than did free or dependent whites.’<sup>67</sup> Klepp suggests that even though most slaves from the West Indies had ‘partial previous exposure to New World diseases...none were accustomed to the cold winter and diseases in Philadelphia.’<sup>68</sup> Norris wrote to Dickinson in 1703 about slaves consigned to him: ‘they’re so chilly they can hardly stir from the fire and wee have early beginning for a hard wintr.’<sup>69</sup> Dickinson complained to his brother, Caleb, that during the winter his slaves had ‘been a great charge unto this winter being not able to earn their bread.’<sup>70</sup>

Despite these concerns, a number of his slaves appear to have been shipped from his Jamaican plantation once they were no longer viable workers. Contrary to O’Malley’s claim that ‘North Americans rarely imported season slaves from the islands, in 1703, Dickinson, from Jamaica, sent Norris three enslaved Africans only because they were no longer capable of satisfactorily performing their plantation duties.’<sup>71</sup> Harry was described

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<sup>66</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Mother Griffiths, 20 April 1715; LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Jonathan Gale, 20 April 1715.

<sup>67</sup> Klepp, ‘Seasoning and Society’, pp. 473-74.

<sup>68</sup> Klepp, ‘Seasoning and Society’, p. 475

<sup>69</sup> Isaac Norris to Dickinson, 1703, quoted in Turner, ‘Slavery in Colonial Pennsylvania’, p. 143.

<sup>70</sup> HSP, JDLB, Dickinson to Caleb Dickinson, 25 April 1698.

<sup>71</sup> O’Malley, ‘Beyond the Middle Passage’, p. 135.



as a ‘choice boiler,’ (a useless skill in Pennsylvania), who also served as a carpenter and wheelwright both of which were in high demand in Philadelphia. As far as Dickinson was concerned he was of ‘good disposition’ but ‘hee hath highly Suspected to have given Poison to Some of the negroes.’<sup>72</sup> In any event, he was no longer fit for life on the plantation. When Harry, along with Quajo and Sampson, arrived in Philadelphia they proved to be problematic for Norris. Harry was especially rebellious; explaining why he could not get a new master for him, Norris remarked: ‘the fellow Grows so Subtill [that] w[he]n any body Comes to Look on him he Limps heartily tells [them] hi is old and Cannot Work.’<sup>73</sup> Norris was apparently unable to sell Harry who remained with Dickinson for the next sixteen years. Harry, as a skilled laborer, may have been one of the many slaves Dickinson rented out. As a skilled laborer, Harry was also able to earn an income.<sup>74</sup>

Thirteen years later in 1715, Dickinson wrote to his brother-in-law Isaac Gale about ‘an old negroe man...Harry that came from peper plantacion’ who was ‘under ye distempler...[and had] been downed for twelve days.’<sup>75</sup> Harry survived his ailments and during the preceding fifteen years he must have provided Dickinson with some useful

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<sup>72</sup> Dickinson to Isaac Norris, 10 April 1703, quoted in Wax, ‘Quaker Merchants and the Slave Trade’, p. 152.

<sup>73</sup> HSP, Maria Dickinson Logan Papers, Jonathan Dickinson Correspondence, Isaac Norris to Dickinson, 12 November 1703.

<sup>74</sup> Many enslaved Africans in Philadelphia, like Harry, lived in intimate contact with white families, most of whom only owned one or two slaves. Even though Dickinson was Philadelphia’s single-largest slave owner during the first decades of the eighteenth century, he generally hired out many of his slaves, keeping only a small number for household service and common labor in his warehouses and store. Throughout the colonial era about two-fifths of Philadelphia’s slaves worked for mariners, artisans, and proprietors of small manufactories. Hence, nearly as many slaves acquired artisan skills as performed domestic service. Nash, *Forging Freedom*, p.11; Nash, ‘Slaves and Slaveowners’, p. 241.

<sup>75</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Isaac Gale 11 August 1716.

income. With his letter to his brother-in-law, Dickinson included a letter from Harry to his son, Jack, still living in Jamaica. With that letter Harry sent his son a ‘box of bread...also two dogs & a bitch all which ye old man [was] very earnest may go safe to his son.’<sup>76</sup> Several years later in 1719, Dickinson related a status report of ‘black servants...left that come from Jamaica’ the list included Jamme, Bassa, Jon, & ajoe Peppers Son & Daughter she left which is called parthannah...and Harry.’<sup>77</sup>

Other times enslaved Africans actively resisted being sold. Norris, for example, informed a Jamaican correspondent in 1702 of the sale of an enslaved African sent to Pennsylvania. His new master, Norris wrote, ‘thinks him a Sullen Lazy Fellow—w[he]n I sold him pretended he could not work S[ai]d his hand was broke and he was good for Nothing I was for it to be Rough w[i]th him to gett him From my Fire side.’<sup>78</sup> Another woman Norris sold the following year was equally as unruly, first disrupting Norris’ household and then escaping after her sale to a Marylander. Norris said that she was ‘very averse to going & Just as the Boat was to put off she gave us the Slip.’<sup>79</sup>

Dickinson received an enslaved woman, Sarah, who some ‘knoweth her to be a valuable negore’ but she ‘exercised her tounge’ to ‘occasion uneasseyes.’<sup>80</sup> Most problematic for Dickinson was Jenny who arrived from Jamaica in 1709. She was lame

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<sup>76</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Joshua Gale, 7 September 1717.

<sup>77</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to John Harriott, 2 June 1719.

<sup>78</sup> Norris to Richard Sleight, 21 December 1702 quoted in Wax ‘Negro Resistance to the Early American Slave Trade’, p. 13

<sup>79</sup> Isaac Norris to Rogers and Mills, 17 June 1703, quoted in Wax, ‘Negro Resistance to The Early American Slave Trade’, p. 13

<sup>80</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Moses Cardose, 7 December 1719; LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Moses Cardose 25 April 1720; LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Moses Cardose, 1 July 1720. By the spring, Dickinson had received offers of £35 and £37 but would not ‘take less the 40.’ By the summer of 1720 Dickinson remitted thirty-seven casks of flour amounting to £29.1.6 to Mosses Cardose taking the women into account ‘allowing for £42 [to] charge for warme clothing, shoes, and stockings.’

and in poor health, which, coupled with her attitude, made it almost impossible to find a buyer. Norris said it was doubtful he could dispose of her 'at any tolerable price, none Yett Will bid any thin for her & ye Negro Says She will not do any thing if She's sold & is Very angry, w[hi]ch is also Discouraging to any buyer.'<sup>81</sup> In 1715, Dickinson wrote to Enoch Stephenson suggesting that:

the Nergo Woman Capt Jonath[an] Barnett Left hath Laine on my hands all winter could not gett any p[er]son to offer anything for her She hath been Sickly & now I fare Shee will Dye Wh[e]n Ever I have any to View her She would make Such faices & Complaints as would prevent their proceeding further.<sup>82</sup>

West Indian slaves arriving Philadelphia often arrived with the stigma of being problematic. In 1701 Norris complained that potential buyers suspected that only slaves who were 'Criminalls or Otherwise of Little worth' were shipped to Pennsylvania. O'Malley suggest this is why North American slave purchasers preferred newly arrived Africans rather than seasoned slaves.<sup>83</sup> After two slaves, one a highly skilled and valuable plantation worker, robbed his strongbox of more money than was 'common for Pilferers,' Norris shipped off the miscreants, telling one correspondent that this had a salutary effect of frightening his other 'servants' into better behavior.<sup>84</sup> This was certainly the case in 1719, when Dickinson sent two enslaved Africans to Richard Miles. Samboe, an enslaved African Dickinson consigned to Miles, was 'a brisk man at work' but was deemed to be 'disposed for' because he 'hath give occasion of offence by taking

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<sup>81</sup> Isaac Norris to Edith Lott, 25 July 1709, quoted in Wax, 'Negro Resistance to the Early American Slave Trade', p. 13.

<sup>82</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Enoch Stephenson, 21 April 1715.

<sup>83</sup> O'Malley, 'Beyond the Middle Passage', p. 136.

<sup>84</sup> Smith, 'Isaac Norris', in *Legislators and Lawmakers, 1710-1756*, p. 764.

too great a latitude amongst ye female so oblidgeth to me.’ Dickinson was probably trying to avoid further issues or legal ramifications for his slave’s actions.

Despite their reputation for being sickly, lame, and recalcitrant, enslaved Africans from the West Indies sold in Pennsylvania but not necessarily on good terms. Credit was universally employed when disposing of slaves, a procedure which sometimes kept Norris and Dickinson from reimbursement for as long as twelve months following a sale. Farmers were prosperous and needed a supply of labor, but almost universally had no specie. Notes of credit rather than cash were successfully used in debt losses and the scarcity of specie within the West Indies forced the slave planters to demand high price, in cash, for their slaves.<sup>85</sup> It was not always easy to collect from one’s debtors, particularly when the slaves were sold to inhabitants of the three Lower Counties. Travel was slow and to call on a defaulter required time and money.<sup>86</sup> Dickinson informed a West Indian planter, Jacob Gutterius, of one such sale and promissory note.<sup>87</sup> The same day Dickinson wrote to Robert Ridous informing him that ‘a negro named Quao’ was sold to a Philadelphia lawyer for thirty pounds.’<sup>88</sup> Dickinson also reported to Thomas Fearon the sale of a ‘negro woman’ to Francis Davenport of West New Jersey.<sup>89</sup> In all three instances Dickinson did not collect ready money for the enslaved Africans.

Conceivably, difficulties arising from the sale of slaves, including the money advances

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<sup>85</sup> Usually their West Indian trade was the means by which Pennsylvanians could obtain money. Oftentimes, however, West Indians received very little currency from England and depended upon their American colonial trading partners to provide them with more money. A strong deterrent to Pennsylvania slave purchasing was a lack of cash: oats and wheat could not easily be bartered away for black laborers. Marable, ‘Death of the Quaker Slave Trade’, pp. 27-28

<sup>86</sup> Wax, ‘Quaker Merchants and the Slave Trade’, p. 154.

<sup>87</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Jacob Gutterius, 26 April 1715

<sup>88</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Robert Redous, 26 April 1715

<sup>89</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Thomas Fearon, April 1715.

made by the factor, would have been treated more lightly had ample profits ensued, but the reward to the factor, in the form of a commission, was little compensation for his time, effort, and expense. Isaac Norris suggested that ‘it is a little accotable that People Should send abroad. Such Infirm Creatures, to fix a Charge & Trouble w[he]n there can be no Reasonable Proffit.’<sup>90</sup>

Dickinson not only traded enslaved Africans, he also traded Indian slaves. The Philadelphia market for Indian slaves, like that of the African market, was not particularly inviting. Dickinson wrote William Smith informing him that ‘many people’ were against the sale of imported Indians for fear that the Pennsylvania tribes, sensing they would soon be enslaved as well, would react with hostility. Dickinson believed that Pennsylvanians had ‘but small tryal of them,’ and that the ‘greatest Objection’ was their running away; consequently, buyers offered ‘but Litell for them.’<sup>91</sup> Pennsylvanians were so opposed to the importation of Indian slaves that a law was passed in 1706 that forbade the importation of Indians for sale.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Isaac Norris to Joseph Curtis, 8 November 1709 quoted in Wax ‘Quaker Merchants and the Slave Trade’, p. 155.

<sup>91</sup> HSP, JDLB, Dickinson to William Smith, 13 April 1698.

<sup>92</sup> ‘The Assembly, the Pennsylvania Economy, and the Growth of the Province, 1710-1756’ in *Legislators and Lawmakers, 1710-1756*, p. 35. Even so, there is evidence that several prominent Pennsylvania Assemblymen owned Indian slaves at the turn of the eighteenth century. William Markham, the lieutenant governor under both proprietary and royal rule stipulated in his will that his entire estate was given to his wife Joanna, except an Indian boy, born in the household, whom he ordered to be emancipated at age 24. Peter Groenendyke a Dutch immigrant from New York, and Kent County Assemblyman was, in 1688, living in Murderkill Hundred with his wife and son, a freeman, a Spanish-Indian slave and his English wife, and a Negro couple. When Robert Wade, one of earliest English Quaker settlers on the west side of the Delaware River, died he left behind a Chester County plantation valued at £600 that included four servants: three enslaved Africans and one Indian valued together at £140. William Trent, a Scottish Anglican merchant who was one of Philadelphia most prominent merchants trading and who rented Dickinson’s warehouse and wharf between Walnut and Spruce Streets for three years, owned at his death eleven slaves including two Indians. Scheib,

Nevertheless, Dickinson bought Indian slaves for his own use well into the 1710s. In 1715, Dickinson wrote to inform his brother-in-law Isaac Gale, to request a ‘younge negroe girle’ in return of an ‘Indian man Named Pompy’ he was sending to Jamaica for his ‘use & with kind treatments he will bee of Vallue in [his] interest.’ John Fisher sold Pompy to Dickinson in Philadelphia. Fisher bought Pompy in South Carolina as a boy and ‘brought him up to his trade’ as a blacksmith. Pompy was also ‘accustomed to husbandry’ as well.<sup>93</sup> Later in the year Dickinson wrote Isaac Gale inquiring as to ‘how the Indian man proves.’<sup>94</sup> In the summer of 1719, Dickinson wrote again to his brother-in-law, Isaac Gale about the death and an ‘Indian boy that was used to doing [his] service.’ Dickinson further lamented that ‘the miss of him at this time is Great.’<sup>95</sup> Dickinson’s involvement with Indian slaves provides further evidence to support Alan Gallay’s claim that the South Carolina Indian slave trade reached many places around the Atlantic world.<sup>96</sup>

### **Legal Restrictions**

The following section examines the legal status of slaves but it is primarily concerned with why legislators were disinterested in regulating slavery in Pennsylvania. By exploring some of Pennsylvania’s more prominent slave-owners who were both legislators and prominent Quakers, this section illustrates that slave-owning was far more

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‘William Markham’, in *Legislators and Lawmakers, 1682-1709*, p. 531; Rosalind J. Beiler, ‘Peter Groenendyke’, in *Legislators and Lawmakers, 1682-1709*, p. 380; Smith ‘Robert Wade’, in *Legislators and Lawmakers, 1682-1709*, pp. 723-24; Carolyn M. Peters, ‘William Trent’, in *Legislators and Lawmakers, 1710-1756*, pp. 993-1000.

<sup>93</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Isaac Gale, 2 May 1715; LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to John Lewis 2 May 1715.

<sup>94</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Isaac Gale 7 November 1715.

<sup>95</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Isaac Gale 1 June 1719.

<sup>96</sup> Alan Gallay, *Indian Slave Trade. The Rise of the English Empire in the American South, 1670-1717* (Hew Haven, 2002) pp. 200-01, 300-01

pervasive and had an impact upon both the development of the port and the agricultural countryside. Furthermore, the following exploration illustrates that very few legislators even considered eliminating slavery in a colony starved for laborers.

The Pennsylvania Assembly primarily concerned itself with regulating the importation of slaves in order to derive an income for the government through the imposition of a tax on imported slaves. The Assembly also took into consideration the regulation of the behavior of slaves resident in the colony. The Pennsylvania legislature first imposed taxes on imported slaves in the autumn Assembly of 1700, with duties between six and twenty shillings, dependent on age, on every slave imported. This action was the first time any laws regarding slavery were sanctioned in Pennsylvania. In January 1706 the Assembly raised the duty to forty shillings on all slaves, but in June 1712, in the wake of a serious revolt in New York, and in response to a petition ‘sign’d by many Hands’ that urged the House to discourage the further importation of slaves, the Assembly raised the tax on imported slaves to £20. Authorities in London repealed the prohibitive law in 1714; forcing the Assembly to cut it to a more modest duty of £5 in May 1715. The rate was continued at the level through several renewals, until a statute of 10 May 1729 reduced it to £2.<sup>97</sup>

The government also found itself concerned with issues relating to the behavior of both enslaved Africans and free people of color in the province. As early as 1693 the inhabitants of Philadelphia complained to the county court about ‘tumultuous gatherings’ of slaves ‘gadding abroad’ on Sundays.<sup>98</sup> Nevertheless, the colonial Pennsylvania

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<sup>97</sup> ‘The Assembly, the Economy, and the Growth of the Province’, in *Legislators and Lawmaking, 1710-1756*, p. 54.

<sup>98</sup> Minutes of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania. From the organization to the termination of the proprietary government, (Harrisburg, 1838), pp. 380-81.

Assembly was unimpressed by any arguments in favor of the abolition of slavery. Just a year after Dickinson's death, the Assembly's committee of grievances actually denounced the practice of manumitting slaves as 'pernicious,' although the remark was made in the context of concern over the manumission of elderly slaves who then became a charge on the community as a whole, rather than an expense to their former master.<sup>99</sup>

This attitude is not surprising, considering that fully one third (108 out of 324) of the representatives elected to the Assembly between 1703 and 1756, are known to have owned at least one slave at some point during their lives.<sup>100</sup> If the period is expanded to include the last two decades of the seventeenth century, at least 131 assemblymen owned at least one slave during their lifetime. In total the Pennsylvania Assemblymen held at least 477 enslaved Africans.<sup>101</sup> During the 1710s, when Quakers were the dominant slave

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<sup>99</sup> Evidently, elderly slaves were a considerable burden to planters. When Edward Farmer's estate was inventoried in 1745, an 'An old Nigroe Man & Woman' were considered to have not value at all. In 1730 Joseph Growdon's enslaved African, 'one aged Negro' was valued at £2 6s. When Septimus Robinson's estate was inventoried the executors valued his four slaves: a man appraised at £45, two women each valued at £25 and '1 Old Negro Man Named Price,' whom the appraisers feared would be 'a Charge to the Estate,' so they assigned him no value at all. Scheib 'Edward Farmer', in *Legislators and Lawmakers, 1710-1756*, p. 360; Joseph S. Foster, 'Joseph Growdon, *Legislators and Lawmakers, 1682-1709*, p. 388; Scheib, 'Septimus Robinson', in *Legislators and Lawmakers, 1710-1756*, p. 908.

<sup>100</sup> There is some difficulty, however, in determining the number of representatives who were slaveholders. The usual sources for such information are inventories of personal estates, which, of course, rarely explain whether a slave was purchased or inherited and whether the representatives owned a slave at the time he served in the Assembly.

<sup>101</sup> For members from Philadelphia City the percentage was more than two-thirds and for the Philadelphia County it was nearly fifty per cent. See 'Selected Characteristics of the Assembly and Its Representative' in *Legislators and Lawmakers, 1710-1756*, pp. 149-50.



owners, the percentage of total Assemblymen who held slaves averaged around fifty percent.<sup>102</sup>

Ultimately, these numbers suggest that large slave holdings in Pennsylvania may have been more widely dispersed than previously suggested by historians who have focused on urban dimensions slavery in Philadelphia. The most prominent slave-owners included both merchants and planters in both Philadelphia and the countryside.<sup>103</sup> The largest single slave holders include: Pieter Alrichs (sixteen), Thomas Sharp (sixteen), Samuel Blunston (fifteen), William Biles (fourteen), Sir William Keith (fourteen), Thomas Stevenson (fourteen), William Trent (eleven), Samuel Preston (twelve), Clement Plumsted (ten), and William Moore (ten). Dickinson and Norris spearheaded this slave-holding contingent.<sup>104</sup> The general impression of Pennsylvanian slaveholding suggesting that the norm was for a slaveholder to rarely hold more than one or two slaves minimizes the importance of slavery to the development to Pennsylvania.<sup>105</sup> Dickinson, for several

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<sup>102</sup> 'Selected Characteristics of the Assembly and Its Representatives in *Legislators and Lawmakers, 1710-1756*, p. 149. Slaveholders represented nine counties in the Delaware Valley. The largest group came from Philadelphia County with thirty-eight slave-owners, Bucks, and Chester came in second and third with twenty-six and twenty-four representatives respectively. The Delaware counties of New Castle (seven), Kent (fourteen), and Sussex (eight) contributed a combined twenty-nine slave-holding representatives, while the City of Philadelphia contributed nine. Cumberland and Lancaster Counties contributed five representatives.

<sup>103</sup> Two men represented Bucks County and Chester County, while Lancaster County and New Castle Counties each with one. Large slave-owners lived in both the country and the city as did their slaves. Of the eleven assemblymen who owned ten or more slaves, five represented Philadelphia County.

<sup>104</sup> 'The Assembly, the Economy, and The Growth of the Province', in *Legislators and Lawmakers, 1710-1756*, p. 55.

<sup>105</sup> Even though most slaveholders only owned one, two, or three slaves, that does not mean that slavery in Pennsylvania was inconsequential. In fact, enslaved Africans impacted many developments in Pennsylvania. For example, Peter Worrall, a wheelwright and farmer, was probably a more typical slave-owner in Bucks County. Before he drowned in the Delaware River in a ferry accident 1705, he owned a 116 acre property on Slatepit Hill near the falls of the Delaware River where he worked along with

scholars, has therefore been the exception that proved the rule. Yet if one considers that twenty-five per cent of assemblymen-slaveholders (33 of 129) held more than five slaves and a third (11 of 33) of those slaveholders held more than ten slaves it appears that Dickinson was not alone in his large slave holdings. Of the thirty-three assemblymen who owned five or more slaves, more than two-thirds were (twenty-three) Quakers.<sup>106</sup> Of the eleven assemblymen who owned more than ten slaves all but three were Quakers.

### **Utilising Enslaved Africans**

A brief exploration of several of the most prominent slave-owners listed in Pennsylvania provides insights into how large slave-owners utilised their slaves. The year Dickinson arrived in Philadelphia at least one man owned more than ten slaves. Pieter Alrichs, a prominent member of the Provincial Council during the 1680s, was not only a large slave-owner but also possibly one of Pennsylvania's earliest slave-traders.<sup>107</sup> Alrichs was integral in organizing inter-imperial and inter-colonial trade during the first decades of

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his two enslaved Africans where they managed to leave behind £23 in tools, £62 in produce, and £74 in livestock. Similarly, before Samuel Burges, a carpenter and yeoman farmer who resided of a 103-acre plantation in Bucks County, died in 1716, he and his single enslaved worked his land leaving behind 22 head of livestock and 12 acres of planted grain. In Chester County, John Evans, a Delawarean-born, mill-owner owned '1 Negro Ladd & I Negro woman & 2 Smal Children.' Along with two 'white servant' Evans and his enslaved Africans worked his wheat fields, gristmill, fulling mill on White Clay Creek in London Britain Township in Chester County until his death in 1738. Small time slave-owners also resided in the city. David Giffing, a blacksmith, who arrived in Philadelphia from Barbados in 1697 made a modest living as a blacksmith. While not a rich man, Giffing resided in an eight-room house with a cellar with his wife, three children and three enslaved Africans: two men and a pregnant woman. David Haugaard, 'Peter Worrall', in *Legislators and Lawmakers, 1683-1709*, pp.771-72; Haugaard, 'Samuel Burges', in *Legislators and Lawmakers, 1710-1756*, pp. 238-39; Foster, 'John Evans', in *Legislators and Lawmakers, 1710-1756*, pp. 348-39; Schieb, 'David Giffing', in *Legislators and Lawmakers, 1710-1756*, pp. 393-94

<sup>106</sup> Seven Anglicans, two members of the Dutch Reform Church, and a Scotsman, whose religion is unknown, round out the list.

<sup>107</sup> Alrichs immigrated to New Amsterdam about 1656 as a commissary for the Dutch West India Company.

European settlement in the Delaware River Valley. In the early 1660s, Alrichs promoted a trade agreement between the Dutch, the Maryland authorities, and a group of Delaware Indians. The Dutch were to send beer and slaves to Maryland in exchange for tobacco and furs. Slowly Alrichs consolidated his interests in the area by carefully negotiating inter-colonial trends. Larger forces, however, were well underway. During the English conquest of New Amsterdam in 1664, English authorities confiscated Alrichs' land and his eleven enslaved Africans. Clearly aware that new opportunities might emerge with the English presence, Alrichs travelled to New York and swore an allegiance to the king of England. With the arrival of William Penn, Alrichs' political career continued to blossom. He was appointed as a representative from New Castle County to the Provincial Council.

By the time of his death, in 1697, Alrichs had accumulated at least four plantations and sixteen slaves. His slaves were all employed on his estates. One estate near New Castle, which was given to his son Sigfridus, contained seven enslaved Africans who were in charge of running a gristmill, a bolting mill, and a tobacco engine. A second estate, at Reed Island, which held three enslaved Africans, who looked after both cattle and hogs, was given to his son, Hermanus. Two other estates, with three enslaved Africans each, were allocated to his two youngest sons, Jacobus and Wessel. While a trader at heart Alrichs utilised his slaves for agricultural development more so than domestic service.<sup>108</sup> Before his arrival in Philadelphia, Dickinson might have imagined his existence in a similar fashion. Alrichs provides us with an instructive example for examining how different Europeans interacted with the various peoples who comprised the Anglo-Atlantic. Alrichs, a large slave owner, traded across the Atlantic

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<sup>108</sup> Horle 'Pieter Alrichs', in *Legislators and Lawmakers, 1682-1709*, pp. 176-79.

and throughout the Delaware River Valley with Native Americans and Europeans alike. Carefully managing his relationships across imperial lines, Alrichs successfully accumulated a vast estate similar to Dickinson's Pennsylvania estate.

Another instructive example is William Biles, who was a wealthy Bucks County Quaker gentleman and farmer who was raised in one of the most prominent households in Bucks County. Biles immigrated to the Delaware River Valley as a boy in 1679. Biles trained as a cooper before he inherited his father's vast landed estate. In the 1720s Biles began a lengthy political career. Biles was the type of man who Dickinson often complained about: farmers who attempted to levy restrictions on Philadelphia's merchant class. In 1721, voters in the city and county of Philadelphia, evidently anxious about the significant down turn of trade (discussed in chapter four), turned out prominent Philadelphia merchants who dominated the Assembly. At the time of his death Biles managed two thriving farms along with at least fourteen slaves that produced 'bountiful crops' and managed at least 187 head of livestock. After his death, the estate was turned over to his wife Sarah, who was then probably the largest single female slave owner in Bucks County if not the Delaware Valley.<sup>109</sup>

Sir William Keith and Lady Keith employed at least fourteen enslaved Africans at their country estate in Horsham Township in Philadelphia County during the early 1720s. In 1721, Keith established a settlement as 'a small Retreat & nourishment to old age,' and was building 'a small Distillery & Brewery.' By early 1726 Keith converted his settlement into a plantation giving up the liquor business and building a 'very large handsome lofty house.' The fourteen slaves not only attended to the Keith's lavish entertaining but also worked a large farm managing at least 100 head of livestock and

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<sup>109</sup> Horle, 'William Biles', in *Legislators and Lawmakers, 1710-1756*, pp. 211-16

seventy-five acres under cultivation. Beyond his estate, Keith also utilised slaves in at least one failed business endeavor. In 1719, Norris reported that Keith's fishing venture, 'in which he employed slaves' had failed. Slaves were evidently a fundamental part of Keith's business ventures and the management of his country-life.<sup>110</sup> Keith's employment of enslaved Africans suggests that at all levels of government, officials actively maintained interest in slavery.

Yet another contemporary of Dickinson, Thomas Stevenson, was a farmer, merchant, gentleman, and a prominent assemblyman from Bucks County who served nine terms. Stevenson, during his lifetime purchased more than 10,000 acres including at least eleven plantations and a cornmill. Stevenson's holdings stretched across the Delaware River Valley from Pennsylvania and New Jersey to Maryland and at the time of his death his personal estate totaled £1,600. Fourteen slaves valued at £380 comprised a significant portion of his estate. While it is unclear exactly where the slaves resided, it may be suggested that that had something to do with at least one of his plantations that produced, at the time of his death, £237 worth of farm produce as well as 200 head of livestock valued at £307.<sup>111</sup>

Philadelphia merchants also owned large numbers of slaves. Clement Plumsted arrived in Philadelphia as a teenager from London and was employed by Samuel Carpenter in the late 1690s before he married Sarah Biddle Righton. His training with Samuel Carpenter undoubtedly exposed him to the prospects and peril of trans-Atlantic trade. Carpenter, a Barbadian transplant, actively engaged in trade with the West Indies

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<sup>110</sup> Haugaard, 'Sir William Keith', in *Legislators and Lawmakers, 1710-1756*, p. 569.

<sup>111</sup> Haugaard, 'Thomas Stevenson' in *Legislators and Lawmakers, 1710-1756*, pp. 950-54

and at various times imported slaves into Philadelphia. Like many Philadelphia merchants Plumsted, through real estate speculation, expanded his holdings considerably during the first several decades of the eighteenth century. Acquiring an estate, Plumsted employed his ten slaves in various ways. Plumsted probably hoped to emulate his wealthy Quakers counterparts. Upon his death in 1745, of Plumsted's ten slaves, five were bequeathed to his wife and son. Another was manumitted with the provision that she received £5 per annum until she could 'shift not longer' and then be maintained by the state. A seventh slave was to remain on the plantation in the Northern Liberties 'to weed and to...garden and be kept in warm Cloathing and have his Diet.' An eighth slave was to be given away to any friend of Plumsted's that would 'use him well.' The ninth slave was to be taken care of by Mary Plumsted, who was also to provide for her in her will, and the last slave was to be apprenticed to learn a trade at the expense of the estate, and after serving out his time, was 'then to be set free.'<sup>112</sup> Plumsted's provisions for his enslaved Africans marks a slight change in Quaker attitudes toward the institution of slavery and plight of enslaved Africans.

Our final example, Jeremiah Langhorne, is a special case. Langhorne, a Bucks County gentleman, officeholder, and farmer, was one of the principal leaders in the House and Bucks County preeminent politician during most of his thirty-four terms in the Assembly. Langhorne died in 1742 having never been married and without any children. Among the various things he left behind to his sister, his nieces, nephews, grandnieces and grandnephews, Langhorne bequeathed his then 800-acre plantation, Langhorne Park, to his twelve-year-old grandnephew, Thomas Biles, grandson of William Biles. The

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<sup>112</sup> Horle, 'Clement Plumsted', in *Legislators and Lawmakers, 1710-1756*, pp. 851-59.

most unusual feature of Langhorne's will was the elaborate and generous provision he made for the manumission and future of his slaves. Eight out of his nine adult slaves were to be freed immediately, with all but one of their children to remain under their care of their parents until reaching the age of twenty-four, when all were to be set free with a £10 legacy. Until 25 March 1751, when Thomas Biles came of age, they were to reside at Langhorne's 'mansion house,' having free use of the property, except for his best parlor and his bedchamber, receiving all the profits of his plantation in return for payment of a £30 annual rent and continuation of the system of crop rotation. A 'reasonable part' of his household goods were to be left to them by the executors. After that time, each of the four black families would receive a house and property totaling 410 acres.

Langhorne's 'instruments of husbandry' as well as twenty-four cows, eighteen horses, and sixty sheep were divided among them. A lifelong bachelor, Langhorne's confidence in his 'negro servants' evidently was borne in part from having left his farm to their charge during his frequent absences. Langhorne's provision more than likely made these four free-black families the wealthiest in Bucks County.<sup>113</sup> Langhorne's provisions for his slaves may seem extraordinary. Langhorne, however, had no one who could utilise his slave laborers; therefore, he probably had little issue providing these favorable conditions to his former enslaved Africans.

A few merchants, like Dickinson, owned more than ten slaves—many of who were hired out.<sup>114</sup> A prominent Welsh gentleman, physician, influential Quaker politician and Norris's father-in-law, Thomas Lloyd, stipulated in his 1694 will that his five slaves and their offspring should be hired out to provide a steady source of income for his wife

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<sup>113</sup> Haugaard, 'James Langhorne', in *Legislators and Lawmakers, 1710-1756*, pp. 631-48

<sup>114</sup> Nash, *Forging Freedom*, p. 11.

and children.<sup>115</sup> In 1739, William Hudson, a Philadelphia politician, bequeathed a female slave and a rent charge on a male slave to his wife.<sup>116</sup> Dickinson, at least in 1715, hired out his slaves at 18d. to 2s. 6d. per day depending on the job.<sup>117</sup>

Slave-owners in Philadelphia, however, found it more difficult to hire-out their blacks as white indentured servants and white freedmen formed coalitions against black slave laborers. In February 1707, ‘several Freemen’ petitioned the Pennsylvania legislature, urging them to discourage the numbers of blacks allowed with the colony that ‘take away the Employment.’ Poor white urban workers again petitioned the legislature in 1723, requesting that the hiring out of blacks be ‘discouraged or wholly prevented,’ since ‘the Keeping of Negroes’ deprived them from earning a living.<sup>118</sup>

Dickinson had other ideas about the possibilities for the Philadelphia labor market. When the Jamaica Assembly enacted several laws aimed at increasing the white population Dickinson, as a large slaveholder and an employer of about forty ‘hired men & Servants,’ devised a plan he apparently regarded as strengthening his plantation while reducing his liability to fines, particularly because his skilled servants had fulfilled their time and new servants were difficult to obtain.<sup>119</sup> He suggested to Norris in November 1705 a scheme whereby he might send to Pennsylvania ‘some likely Negroe Ladds to be put out to Trades for five years’ to be trained as carpenters, wheelwrights, bricklayers, blacksmiths, and coopers, to become, in effect, a replacement force for his servants and hired workers in Jamaica. While in Pennsylvania, of course, they would not be subject to

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<sup>115</sup> Haugaard, ‘Thomas Lloyd’, in *Legislators and Lawmakers, 1682-1709*, p. 515.

<sup>116</sup> Horle, ‘William Hudson’, in *Legislators and Lawmakers, 1682-1709*, p. 458.

<sup>117</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Charles Hill, 14 July 1715.

<sup>118</sup> Wax quoted in Marable, ‘Death of the Quaker Slave Trade’, p. 29.

<sup>119</sup> An Act to Encourage the Importation of White Men, enacted in 1703 as law # 113, Acts of Assembly...Jamaica, pp. 98-101.



finest by Jamaica.<sup>120</sup> Like many of Dickinson's grandiose schemes, there is no evidence he enacted his plan. This episode, however, illustrates that Dickinson continually devised contingency plans when unfavorable circumstance emerged.

On several occasions both Dickinson and Norris reconsider their business in trading slaves. Dickinson's and Norris' aversion to the slave trade was fundamentally grounded in the economics associated with acting as a slave factor. While much of the two merchants' correspondence stresses the bother and expense associated with handling sickly and recalcitrant slaves, they continued to sell slaves for many years after making known their dislike of the trade.<sup>121</sup>

Isaac Norris quite early on made it clear that he would prefer not to be involved in slave traffic but continued to trade slaves. Writing to Dickinson in 1703, he said: 'Jonat[h]a[n] Send me no more nor Recommend me no more Negroes for Sale I Don't like that Sort of Business any thing Else Least Considerable is much more Expectable.'<sup>122</sup> Norris asked Thomas Swan, after receiving two enslaved Africans, to 'excuse at my Friends hands from Concerning mee w[i]th those kind of Creatures.'<sup>123</sup> A few years later Norris wrote to Joseph Curtis, after receiving 'a Lame Negro and Sickly,' suggesting that he 'knew not w[ha]t to Do w[i]th I have no Inclination to be Concern[e]d is Selling

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<sup>120</sup> Dickinson to Norris quoted in Horle, 'Jonathan Dickinson' in *Legislators and Lawmakers, 1710-1756*, p. 314.

<sup>121</sup> They received not only enslaved Africans from the West Indies but many other commodities as well and depended on the island colonies as markets for their goods from Philadelphia. Therefore a clear refusal to deal in enslaved Africans might have interfered with the other business activities and so they continued to sell slaves in spite of small returns and much inconvenience, and in the face of increasingly firm stand against the traffic taken by the Society of Friends. Wax, 'Quakers Merchants and the Slave Trade', p. 156.

<sup>122</sup> Isaac Norris to Dickinson, 12 November 1703, quoted in Wax 'Quaker Merchants and the Slave Trade', p. 150.

<sup>123</sup> Isaac Norris to Thomas Swan, 13 March 1704, quoted in Wax 'Quaker Merchants and the Slave Trade', p. 150.

Nergo's at all & desire to avoid it as much as Possible—but Especially crazy one's are a Charge & won't go off—Thou or thy Friends may comand me in any other business, but I Desire to be Excus'd from Negroes.'<sup>124</sup>

Dickinson also expressed a desire to limit his involvement in the slave trade but never actually stopped dealing in slaves. Some Quakers regarded him as 'an Encourager to Import them.'<sup>125</sup> Dickinson was offended by the accusation stating that he only 'imported slaves for his own use.'<sup>126</sup> Dickinson's expressions against trading slaves were far more infrequent than Norris and tended be less adamant. The criticism he received from Friends seems justifiable in the end. Dickinson dropped a subtle hint to Friend Jacob Gutteres in April 1715, stating that the slave trade did not answer him well: 'One of thy Negroes I sold I have Yett by mee a promissory note for the payment of which I Expect w[i]ll be made good. I am Very Unfitt for Comission business being taken up in other wayes.'<sup>127</sup> The unsecured debt seemed to be the most concerning for Dickinson, when he made a similar comment to Thomas Fearon after a purchaser was reluctant to pay his creditors: 'If thou Doubt or Mislikes It thou please appoint any other [per]son thy atty I Shall render to thy ord[e]r therein.'<sup>128</sup> He also wrote to his brother-in-law, Jonathan Gale, 'I must intreat ye not to send any more to mee for our people do not care to by except of boys and girles and ye generlait of our people are against any comeing into the country.'<sup>129</sup> A letter from 1715 expresses Dickinson's position. He wrote to his brother

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<sup>124</sup> Isaac Norris to Joseph Curtis, 25 July 1709, quoted in Wax 'Quaker Merchants and the Slave Trade', p. 150.

<sup>125</sup> Horle, 'Jonathan Dickinson', in *Legislators and Lawmakers, 1710-1756*, p. 316.

<sup>126</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Caleb Dickinson, 2 May 1715.

<sup>127</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Jacob Gutteres 25 April 1715.

<sup>128</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Thomas Fearon, 26 April 1715.

<sup>129</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Jonathan Gale, 30 April 1715.

that 'I must desire [you] to send no more for they are no small trouble.' In the same letter, however, Dickinson requested that his brother send several 'negro girls' to him from Jamaica.<sup>130</sup> The vituperations of these two Quakers against the trade, lacking any vigorous moral or religious indignation, must be viewed in light of the factors mentioned above including the quality of slaves and the difficulties of the market.<sup>131</sup>

## **Conclusion**

Ultimately, Dickinson only traded and owned slaves in Pennsylvania for two decades. Yet the time in which he was involved in the slave trade was foundational in setting the precedent for slave-holding in Pennsylvania. It was also a critical period in the development of the Quaker anti-slavery movement. Slavery and the anti-slavery movement continued long after Dickinson's death in 1722 but as Herbert Aptheker suggests, the 'prevailing general impression that the Quakers represented, as a body, throughout their history a solid phalanx aligned against human enslavement...is fallacious.'<sup>132</sup> The height of slavery in Pennsylvania did not come until several decades after Dickinson's death and it was not until 1750 that Quakers came together against slavery. In many ways, Dickinson's and other Quakers' involvement in slave-holding and slave-trading provided the impetus for the Quaker movement to end slavery. Yet in other ways, both slave-owning and anti-slavery sentiment in Pennsylvania were just getting underway. Once again, we find Dickinson in a place where fundamental changes throughout the Anglo-Atlantic world were well underway.

Darold Wax suggested that the Pennsylvania slave trade 'was a slowly developing process.' The period before 1730 mentioned above was followed by a period when

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<sup>130</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Caleb Dickinson, 2 May 1715.

<sup>131</sup> Wax, 'Quaker Merchants and the Slave Trade', p. 151.

<sup>132</sup> Aptheker, 'The Quakers and Negro Slavery', p. 331.

Philadelphia merchants actively began importing enslaved Africans from the West Indies and selling them in the local market; that is to say, merchant owners of vessels not only purchased the slaves in the islands but also sold them in Pennsylvania (containing perhaps as many as thirty or forty slaves) thereby eliminating middlemen like Dickinson. The growth of Philadelphia and greater Pennsylvania undoubtedly engendered a greater need for labor. Wax continued by suggesting that this method changed with the outbreak of the Seven Years' War when the demand for slaves rose exponentially. Thus the period from 1755 to 1765, when white laborers were relatively sparse in the Delaware River Valley represented the summit of the Pennsylvania slave trade. This period was characterised by mainly large cargoes of slaves entering the Delaware River directly from the west coast of Africa.<sup>133</sup>

Without Dickinson and other prominent Quakers involvement in slavery there might have been less cause for Quakers to take a stance against the institution. The shift to direct importations may have occurred earlier and Quaker involvement in the trade may have been muted. The involvement of Quakers in African slavery, however, was a subject broached at many Monthly and Yearly Meetings thereby constantly stoking the fiery conversation regarding the nature of slavery and proper Quakerism. At many times the Society of Friends constantly had to negotiate between their twin goals of spiritual reflection and economic subsistence. Kristen Block argues that early in the 1660s prominent Friends in Britain and the colonies critiqued the ostentation, greed, and lack of concern for others that they believed were on the rise in their times. Throughout the latter part of the century, Friends grappled with the factionalism and the ethics of wealth and capitalism. Since slavery was the foundation for the prosperity of nearly all West

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<sup>133</sup> Wax, "Quakers and the Slave Trade", pp. 144-45.

Indian Quakers and many other Quakers in the American colonies, the matter also became a subject of moral concern.<sup>134</sup> The general concern of many Pennsylvanian Quakers during the first two decades of the eighteenth century, however, was how to acquire better, cheaper, and healthier enslaved Africans who could continue to help Philadelphia commerce and the surrounding agricultural lands *become Atlantic*.

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<sup>134</sup> Block, 'Cultivating Inner and Outer Plantations', pp. 518-19.

## CHAPTER 6: THE DECLINE OF DICKINSON'S TRANS-ATLANTIC ESTATE

Only if I could find Language to Express ye load of trouble that lies on me with the rest of us I should indulge myself in bewailing our misfortune in engaging when under no previous obligation to it, in the most perplexing affair that any of us have ever been concerned in which in return to sincere friendship is like to produce no other fruit than that of the basest ingratitude...the Testator Died in my Debt by his own books as he generally had been more or less for Ten Years before and so is like to continue for I have not to this day had the Value of one Shilling from what he left. Nay we had not so much as one Bottle of Wine or other Liquor out of the cellar when wee met in the house on business except Joseph who claimed that to himself thought fit at any time to offer a glass so scrupulous we have ever been in touching what was not our own.<sup>1</sup>

Against the wishes of Dickinson's children, Isaac Norris, James Logan, and George Claypool reluctantly took on the convoluted task of settling Dickinson's trans-Atlantic estate in 1722. As the executors familiarised themselves with Dickinson's many North American, Caribbean, African, and English accounts, they quickly recognised the immense task ahead. Less than a year after Dickinson's death, James Logan expressed his frustrations (above) with the many problems he encountered while attempting to settle Dickinson's affairs. Norris ranked the 'perplexing affair' among the most 'unhappy &

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<sup>1</sup> Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Logan Family Papers, 1638-1964, Series 1, Box 45, Letters of Jonathan Dickinson's Estate from Isaac Norris, James Logan, and George Claypool, 1722-1728, James Logan to Isaac Gale, 23 September 1723.

troublesome accidents' of his life.<sup>2</sup> Despite the initial problems, neither Logan nor Norris could have expected the affair to be as complicated and lengthy as it proved to be.

For nearly four decades, trans-Atlantic lawsuits, false allegations of theft, manipulation, bitter name-calling, threats of violence, physical assaults, property destruction, and constant infighting between Dickinson's children, relatives, and closest friends characterised the wind up of his estate. The conflict outlasted nearly all the combatants involved, ruined long-standing relationships, witnessed the end of an impressive early-Atlantic business model, and destroyed the reputation of one of early-Philadelphia's most economically prominent and politically influential families. For historians, this episode provides further evidence regarding the precarious nature of trans-Atlantic trade during the early eighteenth century and provides interesting insights into the nature trans-Atlantic debt settlement. This episode further illustrates the emergence of a colonial elite in Pennsylvania. It also reveals the fragility of this small but influential group. These tribulations represent Dickinson's final, albeit posthumous, struggle to contend with the uncertainties of the Atlantic world.

More a *dénouement* than a climax, this ordeal reveals several themes about Dickinson's life and the nature of early-eighteenth century Anglo-Atlantic world. First, while contingency and resolve characterised much of Dickinson's life, his ambition, in many ways, brought about the collapse of all he struggled to keep together. During Dickinson's life the Anglo-Atlantic underwent fundamental changes, which I have attempted to illustrate in the proceeding chapters and will further articulate below. Despite an inability to control larger forces at work, Dickinson, almost invariably,

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<sup>2</sup> HSP, Norris Family Papers, collection 454, vol. 18, Isaac Norris Letter Book, 1716-1730, Isaac Norris to Thomas Hyam, 4 (no month) 1727, p. 500.

adjusted accordingly to the uncertain circumstances of the trans-Atlantic trade.

Nevertheless, during the years immediately before his death the uncertainty of the previous two decades converged on a physically, financially, and emotionally exhausted man who could no longer contend with his personal and professional circumstances.

In 1721, after years of poor health, the death of his wife, the misadventures of his children, a number of bad trading ventures, poor crop production in the Caribbean, and a household robbery, Dickinson was all but defeated. Yet, Dickinson worked vigorously at managing his plantations in Jamaica, expanding his real estate in Pennsylvania, setting a course for his children, and continuing his trans-Atlantic mercantile ventures in effort to maintain his family's relatively extravagant lifestyle. Ironically, toward the end of his life, sugar planting in Jamaica and Pennsylvanian trans-Atlantic trade began to turn unprecedented profits.<sup>3</sup> Dickinson, however, had violated the Society of Friends unwritten rule against conducting business beyond one's abilities and therefore neither he nor his children saw lasting benefits of this shift in production and trade in the Anglo-Atlantic colonies.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> The rise of large plantation system and the rise of creole elites made this period from the 1720s very profitable. See John McCusker and Russell Menard, *The Economy of British America, 1607-1789* (Chapel Hill, 1985); Trevor Burnard, *Creole Gentlemen. The Maryland Elite, 1691-1776* (New York, 2002).

<sup>4</sup> Frederick Tolles suggested that 'the virtues of industry and frugality were, of course, held in high repute among Friends...[while] prudence, honesty, and a strong sense of order, were the other virtues that contributed to Quaker business success.' While most Friends were known for extreme caution in their business undertakings and their book of discipline contained standing advice against buying, bargaining, or contracting beyond one's abilities, Dickinson clearly overextending himself in the late 1710s and created a multitude of problems for his family, friends, and business associates. His overextension and ambition brought about the demise of his trans-Atlantic estate. In their meetings for discipline Friends were constantly warned against imprudent ventures by the query: "are Friends careful to live within the Bounds of their Circumstances, and to avoid launching into Trade or Business beyond their ability to manage?" Tolles, *Quakers and the Atlantic Culture* (New York, 1960), pp. 62-64.



By examining Dickinson's personal and professional hardships during the final years of his life, the 40-year legal battle surrounding his estate, and the estate's eventual disintegration, this chapter seeks to personalise a largely impersonal Atlantic-world narrative. The following exploration of the intensely personal situation surrounding Dickinson's death and the settlement of his trans-Atlantic estate is organised into three sections. The first explores Dickinson's tumultuous personal life at the end of the 1710s arguing that his personal woes affected his ability to effectively manage his trans-Atlantic business. Second, this chapter argues that the extension of Dickinson's estate in Pennsylvania, the maintenance of his family, and poor production on his Jamaican estates created cash-flow problems leaving Dickinson, his children, and the executors of his will in a precarious financial situation. The final section of this chapter explores the multi-generational struggle to settle Dickinson's debts and the subsequent collapse of his estate. In the end, this chapter serves to close our story of Dickinson's Atlantic world.

Probate records of Dickinson's estate, which one might assume provide the bulk of the evidence for this chapter, are relatively sparse.<sup>5</sup> While probate records, as Gloria Main suggests, 'provide quantitative outlines of colonial economic development, furnish profiles of evolving social structure, and sketch the contours of cultural change,' they

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<sup>5</sup> Historians have discussed at some length the problems associated with probate records. See Gloria Main, 'Personal Wealth in Colonial America: Explorations in the Use of Probate Records from Maryland and Massachusetts, 1650 to 1720' *The Journal of Economic History*, 34:1 (1974), pp. 289-94; Main, 'Probate Records as a Source for Early American History', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 32:1 (1975), pp. 89-99; Main, 'The Standard of Living in Colonial Massachusetts', *The Journal of Economic History* 43:1 (1983), pp. 101-08; Carole Shammas, 'Constructing a Wealth Distribution from Probate Records', *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 9:2 (1978), pp. 297-307; Holly Izard, 'Random or Systematic: An Evaluation of the Probate Process', *Winterthur Portfolio*, 32:2/3 (1997), pp. 147-67; John Bedell, 'Archaeology and Probate Inventories in the Study of Eighteenth-Century Life', *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 31:2 (2000), pp. 223-45.

provide little insight into the lived reality of estate settlement.<sup>6</sup> Undoubtedly, wills, inventories, and accounts of administration ‘can reveal the ways in which men disposed of their property among their spouses, children, relatives, and friends’ and can shed light ‘on family life, the status of women, and the treatment of servants and slaves,’ but these typical documents could be supported by more personal documents.<sup>7</sup> In this case, a detailed letter-book from Dickinson’s executors reveals strong insights into the complications of estate settlement. This letter-book provides much more than evidence of the Dickinson’s standard of living. It reveals intimate details regarding Dickinson’s relationships with his children, extended family, friends, and business associations. It, along with Dickinson’s letters before his death, is the preferred source for the following examination.

### **Dickinson’s Woes**

Philadelphia was certainly healthier than Jamaica at the turn of the eighteenth century.<sup>8</sup> Yet Dickinson consistently complained about various distempers, fevers, bouts of small pox, and other ailments that plagued his family, his enslaved Africans, and greater Philadelphia.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, from the mid-1710s, Dickinson increasingly complained about

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<sup>6</sup> Main, ‘Probate Records as a Source for Early American History’, pp. 89-99.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, p. 90.

<sup>8</sup> Susan E. Kleep, ‘Seasoning and Society: Racial Differences in Mortality in Eighteenth-Century Philadelphia, *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 51:3 (1994), pp. 473-506; Trevor Burnard, ‘A Failed Settler Society: Marriage Demographic Failure in Early Jamaica,’ *Journal of Social History*, 28:1 (1994), pp. 63-82; Burnard, ‘The Countrie Continues Sicklie: White Mortality in Jamaica, 1655-1780, *Social History of Medicine*, 12:1 (1999), pp. 45-72.

<sup>9</sup> Dickinson reported the death of an Indian man after a ‘long sickness,’ loosing a number of his enslaved Africans to illness, and Joseph Kirle being ‘nigh Death’ in 1698. HPS, JDLB, Dickinson to James Stanyame, 13 April 1698; Dickinson to Cozen Price, 16 April 1698; Dickinson to James Pinnick, 21 April 1698; Dickinson to Francis Dickinson, 21 April 1698; Dickinson to Caleb Dickinson, 25 April 1698. Dickinson reported a ‘sickness in North America...many dead in Virginia and Maryland in 1698. HSP, JDLB,

his ailing health, particularly tremendous bouts of gout sometimes lasting as long as five weeks.<sup>10</sup> Dickinson's ailments, while not life-threatening, rendered him bedridden for weeks at a time, hindered his ability to keep his accounts current, and kept him from his correspondence.<sup>11</sup>

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Dickinson to Abraham Wilson, 11 May 1698. This sickness must have spread to Philadelphia because Dickinson reported to his father that 'we had been sickly this winter and & some dead (enslaved Africans). HSP, JDLB, Dickinson to Francis Dickinson, 13 May 1698. Later in the year Dickinson once again to his father 'my famaly hath been visited by sickness my son Jonathan was nigh unto death having given him up and (Joseph was 'very ill) when his distemper was a ye height...Negro Beu was taken who after 8 day sickness dyed and since the other Negro woman Hagar goth sick.' HSP, JDLB, Dickinson to Francis Dickinson, 18 October 1698; Dickinson to Francis Dickinson 28 November 1698. In 1700 Dickinson reported that on a trip from Jamaica to Philadelphia that he had a 'sharpe fitt of collick [that] almost took away ye use of my limbs.' HSP, JDLB, Dickinson to James Mills, 17 July 1700. In 1715 Dickinson lost his infant son, Isaac to an unknown ailment. LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Elizabeth Gaffers, 26 April 1715. That same month he reported losing 'his son and negros to malignant fevor.' LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Mother Griffiths, 30 April 1715; Dickinson to Mons Denzell, 23 August 1716. In Dickinson's family contracted small pox: 'all my family have had ye small post tenn in slumber & throu mercy all recovered, they son John was ye seized thereby & had they very thick...son Jonathan's wife has not yet had ye Small Pox.' LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Isaac Gale, 28 November 1716. Apparently this was Dickinson's family's second bout with small pox he reported that although a 'few hundred dead from small pox' that 'my two daughters & my two cousins have got well hero my sons had it here in 1702.' LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Rich Champion, 12 October 1716; Dickinson to Thomas Maleigh, 18 October 1716. He reported to his brother-in-law Jonathan Gale that 'small pox hath gone through our town few haveing escaped it.' LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Jonathan Gale, 28 November 1716. In 1719, Dickinson reported of 'sickness in Philadelphia.' He continued that 'my wife hath ye feavor and been very ill...my son John hat been sadly sett with Boyles.' LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Jonathan Gale, 19 November 1719.

<sup>10</sup>LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Joshua Crosby, 17 November 1719

<sup>11</sup>In 1716, Dickinson informed John Lewis that he had been 'laid up with Gout' which 'hath hindered my not writing'. LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to John Lewis, 13 April 1716. He made the same complaint to Captain Barnett, and to his brother Caleb from Flushing, New York shortly after his son's marriage. LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Captain Barnett, 13 April 1716; Dickinson to Caleb Dickinson, 10 May 1716. A year later he suggested to his brother-in-law, Ezekiel Gomersall, that 'sometimes [he was] affected with ye gout.' LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Ezekiel Gomersall, 2 September 1717. Two years later, however, Dickinson complained about bouts of 'turbulent gout' that lasted for several weeks; he suggested to his factor in London, John Askew several months later that he 'was down with gouat and am not fully got over it as yet.' LCP, JDLB, Dickinson

Dickinson's tribulations emerged at a fundamental turning point in communications in the Anglo-Atlantic world. Steele contends that 'communications continued to improve with increased shipping, extended postal services, and the flourishing of newspapers' in the generation after 1714.<sup>12</sup> For Dickinson's generation, however, personal correspondence provided the sole means of communication between the various parts of the Anglo-Atlantic world. The early modern merchant, as Steele suggests, 'sought prompt and private information...[which] began with some effort to predict markets.'<sup>13</sup> Lags in communication presented a number of issues for merchants contending with the factors that affected local markets. Zahedieh suggests that 'the long turn-around times in transoceanic trade stimulated refinements in credit practices to smooth the long chains linking a network of domestic suppliers and distributors with overseas customers.'<sup>14</sup> Kinks in the chain, such as interruptions in correspondence, put stress upon personal and professional relationships and undoubtedly upset the delicate

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to Richard Miles, 30 July 1719; Dickinson to John Askew, 27 August 1719; Dickinson to Thomas Mayleigh, 29 August 1719; Dickinson to Thomas Hyam, 29 August 1719. His understanding of his condition, however, was flawed. Dickinson attributed his gout to drinking poor quality wine: 'I lost t[w]o pypes of my faune which occasioned me last winter to drink poor wine which I have suff[e]red for since by ye gout which many of friends conjecture to be ye occasion.' In 1721, Dickinson lamented his illness at length and asked for help in relieving his pain: 'I was indisposed so much out of order as made me keep my chamber for some time past my infirmity brought me down by a flying gouty humour that gets up to my stomach and puts me under great distress I have been afflicted with it these three summers and nothing relieves me but a rich generous claret wine which drives it to ye extream parts. This remeday I must provide myself with or I maybe in great danger on these afterpoints I expect thou will provide for thy old friend.' LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to John Askew, 8 September 1719; Dickinson to John Askew, 28 August 1721.

<sup>12</sup> Steele, *The English Atlantic*, p. 250.

<sup>13</sup> Steele, *The English Atlantic*, pp. 213-14.

<sup>14</sup> Nuala Zahedieh, 'Overseas Expansion and Trade in the Seventeenth Century' in Nicolas Canny (ed.) *The Origins of Empire* (Oxford, 1998), p. 419.

balance between mercantile peril and prosperity. Trans-Atlantic credit and debt will be discussed in more detail below.

While Dickinson's personal ailments impacted his ability to conduct business, family illnesses also kept him from his correspondence. Just as Dickinson recovered from a bout of gout, his wife 'having gott cold [was] much out of order having an ague & fevor.'<sup>15</sup> A week later Dickinson explained the severity of her sickness to Richard Champion: 'My wife bei[n]g sized...with a Violent feavor...is in a week and low condition which comes soe near me [that] I am unfit for any business.'<sup>16</sup> Dickinson opined that 'I am under much trouble my wife being dangerously ill;' he further lamented, that he was 'not fitt to put [his] pain to paper.'<sup>17</sup> Dickinson suggested to Joshua Hyam that he was 'strongly afflict[ed]' by his wife's illness that he had 'not a turne of thoughts to answer those just demands which is due.'<sup>18</sup> To Thomas Hyam, he suggested that his concern for his wife had rendered unable 'to compose it [his mind] for business.'<sup>19</sup> While her family members expressed concern over his health, Dickinson's business associates expressed more concern for their accounts. Increasingly, at the end of the 1710s, Dickinson was apologising to his associates for his infrequent letters and overextended accounts. Since frequent correspondence was necessary in 'the struggle to plan economic advantage[s],' Dickinson's failure to 'exploit the latest intelligence' provided many uneasy moments for Dickinson's business associates.<sup>20</sup> Ultimately, this

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<sup>15</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Jonathan Gale, 18 November 1719.

<sup>16</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Richard Champion, 27 November 1719.

<sup>17</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to John Askew, 28 November 1719; LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Thomas Mayleigh, 28 November 1719.

<sup>18</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Joshua Hyam, 28 November 1719.

<sup>19</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Thomas Hyam, 29 November 1719.

<sup>20</sup> Steele, *The English Atlantic*, p. 218.

lag in communication brought about by the conditions of Dickinson personal life set in motion the many problems associated with the estate well before his death in 1722.

Dickinson's correspondence suffered further after 30 November 1719, when twelve days from her first fever, Mary Dickinson died. Dickinson wrote in 'deep mourning' about the 'great loss to me and my Dear Children having [to] part with my Deare Wife last night.'<sup>21</sup> He further lamented that 'our loss in her is more than I with words can express.'<sup>22</sup> He called her death, 'the greatest loss [that] could be fall mee and myne.'<sup>23</sup> He also suggested that he had 'parted with one of [his] most greatest comforts in this life [his] most valluble companion.'<sup>24</sup> Mary's death marked a personal turning point in Dickinson's life. Suddenly, Dickinson's priorities shifted. The man, who for most of his life seemed solely concerned with mercantile pursuits, was reined in by the growing uncertainty of his family's future. Evidently, Mary was a temperate voice of reason, a mediator between father and sons, a good household manager, and a loving mother and wife. In her absence, extenuating circumstances forced Dickinson to reconcile his relationships with his children by determining the best course for their future, all while attempting to correct his own errant financial course.

Immediately after Mary's death, Dickinson's concerned himself most with the future of his children. In all, Dickinson and Mary had six children, four boys and two girls. Mary gave birth to her first child, Jonathan, six months before the Dickinsons first departed from Jamaica in 1696.<sup>25</sup> Dickinson's second and third sons, Joseph and John,

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<sup>21</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Thomas Hyam, 1 December 1719.

<sup>22</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Vassall, 4 December 1719, 1719.

<sup>23</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Caleb Dickinson, 4 December 1719.

<sup>24</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Eastwick and Gale, 7 December 1719.

<sup>25</sup> Many times during their trek through Florida, baby Jonathan was 'nigh unto death' but he survived and arrived in Philadelphia with the Dickinsons in 1697.

were born in Philadelphia in on 3 April 1698 and 29 March 1701 respectively.<sup>26</sup>

Dickinson's business and family commitments, however, continually pulled him away from Philadelphia and his young family. When Dickinson's father fell ill during the spring of 1701, he suggested to his brother-in-law, Ezekiel Gomersall, 'as to my goeing to Jamaica...my wife cannot consent I should goe and leave her here and she cannot move having a child not two months old and to remove the other two would be a great risque.'<sup>27</sup> Nevertheless, Dickinson decided to make a voyage to Jamaica bringing along his wife and their youngest son, John.<sup>28</sup> Dickinson left the eldest boys, Jonathan, aged 6, and Joseph, aged 4, in the care of prominent Friends, Samuel and Rachel Preston.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> HSP, JDLB, Dickinson to Cozen Prince, 16 April 1698; Dickinson to Francis Dickinson, 21 April 1698; Dickinson to Francis Dickinson, 13 May 1698; Dickinson to Isaac Gale, 31 March 1701; Dickinson to Ezekiel Gomersall, 31 March 1701. Although the Dickinsons were visited by sickness in the summer of 1698 both Jonathan, who was again 'nigh unto death' and Dickinson had 'given him up' and Joseph was 'very ill' both survived HSP, JDLB, Dickinson to Francis Dickinson, 18 October 1698; Dickinson to Francis Dickinson, 28 November 1698. After a year Dickinson returned to Jamaica and was never again separated from his wife. Moreover, shortly after his return to Philadelphia, Dickinson and Mary conceived their third child, John. Upon the birth of their third child, Dickinson reported that his wife and newborn child like their two sons, Jonathan and Joseph, were all well. HSP, JDLB, Dickinson to Isaac Gale, 31 March 1701; Dickinson to Isaac Gale, 24 April 1701.

<sup>27</sup> HSP, JDLB, Dickinson to Ezekiel Gomersall 20 May 1701.

<sup>28</sup> In the spring of 1702 Dickinson received a certificated of removal for himself, his wife, and his youngest son, John, to return to Jamaica. The Dickinson's arrived in Jamaica by late September 1702 and moved onto Pepper plantation, about 12 miles from Francis Dickinson's home at Barton, and about 100 miles from Kingston and Port Royal. Craig W. Horle, 'Jonathan Dickinson', in Craig W. Horle, Jeffery L. Scheib, and Joseph S. Foster (eds), *Lawmaking and Legislators in Pennsylvania. A Biographical Dictionary, 1710-1756* (Philadelphia, 1991), p. 311.

<sup>29</sup> What Dickinson intended to be a relatively brief trip to Jamaica evolved into an extended stay in the island after his father's death in 1704. For various reasons, particularly the fact that his legacy in Jamaica had been 'in a declining state' and therefore he had 'to Launch out very Largly to Reinforce it,' the Dickinsons remained in Jamaica until the June 1709. Most of Dickinson efforts while in Jamaica were focused on situating his the two sugar plantations, he now shared with his brother Caleb, in an effort to establish a permanent, sound source of income from himself and his heirs. HSP, MDLP, Dickinson to Samuel Carpenter, undated.

During the next seven years in Jamaica, Dickinson's family continued to grow. Mary gave birth to her first daughter, Mary, in 1704 or 1705.<sup>30</sup> When the Dickinsons departed from Jamaica in 1709, Mary was once again pregnant with her fifth child, a second daughter, Hannah who was born in Saint Domingue after French privateers took Dickinson's ship in the Bahamas.<sup>31</sup>

During Dickinson's time in Jamaica, the Prestons struggled with raising his two eldest sons. The Prestons, along with Norris, Logan, and other prominent Philadelphia Quakers, continually updated Dickinson about the status of his boys. From Jamaica, Dickinson paid for their education and upkeep and he occasionally sent them tokens of affection.<sup>32</sup> Nevertheless, Dickinson and his wife, in the minds of Jonathan and Joseph, who were very young when their parents departed, were probably little more than names at the end of letters and gifts. Their surrogate mother, Rachel Preston, who James Logan

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<sup>30</sup> HSP, MDLP, Dickinson to Samuel Carpenter, undated.

<sup>31</sup> Thomas Story, Sometime between 1710 and 1714, Dickinson and Mary had a sixth child, Isaac, who died after 'a sickly season' from 'first ye Meassles w[hi]ch was followed w[i]th a malignant feaver' in the summer of 1714. LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Elizabeth Gaffers, 26 April 1715; Dickinson to Mother Griffiths, 30 April 1715.

<sup>32</sup> Dickinson wrote to Isaac Norris: 'I do further request of thee to know of thy brother & sister Preston what I shall give a year for the boarding on my children if twenty pounds per anno for each may suffice' HSP, JDLB, Dickinson to Isaac Norris, 10 April 1703. In response, Norris suggested that that no matter what cost the boys 'shall want no Assistance of money Clothing...or anything needful.' Isaac Norris to Dickinson, quoted in Horle 'Jonathan Dickinson', in *Lawmakers and Legislators*, p. 325). Nevertheless, Richard Hill suggested to Dickinson that the boys were 'Much taken w[ith] their Mothers letter & your tokens sent them and have bin very Just in Distributeing the Orranges according to direction.' Richard Hill to Dickinson, quoted in Horle, 'Jonathan Dickinson' in *Lawmakers and Legislators*, p. 325. Dickinson, in 1703, sent a box 'Containing Some Linnen & Cloathing w[i]th what Elce my wife hath put up for Our Sons, And a P[ar]cell of Doves in Cages, Two Gurney henns and two Kids of Corne for thy Subsitence.' HSP, MDLP, Dickinson to Isaac Norris, 10 April 1703.



characterised as an indulgent and extremely loving mother, should be credited with raising the boys during their adolescence.<sup>33</sup>

During Dickinson's seven-year absence, however, Jonathan and Joseph proved to be quite a handful for the Prestons. The two boys were fond of one another and were often characterised as extremely high-spirited, rugged, and relatively uninterested in school.<sup>34</sup> Jonathan apparently matured while Joseph remained 'wild.'<sup>35</sup> In support of Jonathan, Samuel Hudson commented to Dickinson that he 'sometimes observed Jonathan to reprove him [Joseph] from Some of his Little tricks.' He further suggested that 'it often proves that a naughty boy makes a good man.'<sup>36</sup> A number of Friends believed that the Dickinsons needed to return to Philadelphia for the sake of their children

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<sup>33</sup> James Logan called her 'too affectionate' toward them, while in a later letter, he eulogized her care for younger Jonathan during a serious illness: 'what Difference there may be between a Mother & her in the Heart itself is impossible for me to judge but this I can boldly Say, that I never Saw even the fondness of Mother Shew more tenderness and Concern than she did through the whole time...to a degree that I thought twas impossible for Nature to support it.' James Logan quoted in Horle, 'Jonathan Dickinson', in *Lawmakers and Legislators*, pp. 325-26.

<sup>34</sup> Rachel Preston called the boys 'Children of the greatest Spirit that ever I meet with, thay Rain as admaralls amongst the boys and have them in as good subjection as many a master has his Shooters; they are of the most undau[n]ted Corage and Cary ther Resentments very high.' HSP, MDLP, Rachel Preston to Dickinson, 13 August 1702. On another occasion, she referred to them as 'harty and Cherfull, Brisk and Lively' while her husband said they possessed a 'well brisk and Chearefull Spirit to the highest degree.' HSP, MDLP, Samuel Preston to Dickinson 13 August 1703. James Logan wrote to Dickinson in 1704: 'I shall acquaint thee they thy two rugged boyes are very lusty, love the River much better this hot weather than their Masters Countenance and the field & boats far before School or books' James Logan to Dickinson, June 1704, quoted in Horle, 'Jonathan Dickinson', in *Lawmakers and Legislators*, p. 325. Rachel Preston, in the previous month, suggested that Jonathan 'loves his school rather beter then his brother but Improves in his larning slowly.' Two years later, Isaac and Mary Norris suggested to Mary Dickinson that they boys 'come forward handsomely enough in their Learning, And Altho[ugh] they may Seem to have Somew[ha]t that appears Resolute and a Little Rough in their temper & Carriage Yet there is room for Polishing & they have A Ground to work on.' HSP, MDLP, Isaac and Mary Norris to Mary Dickinson, 21 March 1705/06.

<sup>35</sup> Jonathan almost died in 1703 and again in 1706 from severe illness. He also broke his arm in 1705 'Jumping off a hay Stack.'

<sup>36</sup> HSP, MDLP, Samuel Hudson to Jonathan Dickinson, 1 June 1706.

and their friendships. As early as June 1704, James Logan, while praising Rachel Preston, stressed that even she ‘most eagerly’ desired that ‘her care should be succeed by Her to whom Nature had given a nearer and stronger Right.’<sup>37</sup> In October of 1705, Norris offered sharper criticism: ‘I...wish heartily thy coming as well on their Acco[un]t as for the Cause of Friendship.’ He stressed it was ‘high time’ for their parents, rather than a ‘best fr[ien]d to oversee them, since their ‘temper & years’ demanded ‘Stricter discipline’ than was possible ‘under the present Circumstances.’<sup>38</sup>

Dickinson acknowledged the immense responsibility he placed on his friends in Philadelphia. In November 1706, he wrote to Rachel Preston expressing his concern that he had not appropriately acknowledged her ‘care & trouble’ in raising the boys, adding that nothing should be spared ‘to Improve them in their manners & morals.’<sup>39</sup> The Philadelphia Friends certainly held the boys close to their hearts but the impetuosity of the boys in their youth only proved to be a prelude to the immense trouble Jonathan, and especially, Joseph gave both Isaac Norris and James Logan after their father’s death.

### **Coming of Age**

Near the end of his life, and particularly after the death of his wife, Dickinson struggled with setting a course for his impetuous children. Dickinson’s preoccupation with his children’s future further disrupted his trans-Atlantic business affairs and upset his balance sheet. Settling his sons on a plantation outside Philadelphia not only required large outlays of capital but it also required that Dickinson remain in Pennsylvania to help established crops, labor, and supplies. Both took him away from his own trans-Atlantic

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<sup>37</sup> James Logan quoted in Horle, ‘Jonathan Dickinson’, in *Lawmakers and Legislators*, p. 315.

<sup>38</sup> Isaac Norris quoted in Horle, ‘Jonathan Dickinson’, in *Lawmakers and Legislators*, p. 315.

<sup>39</sup> HSP, MDLP, Dickinson to Rachel Preston, 21 November 1705.

business affairs. By the late 1710s, Dickinson was keenly aware of the problems his friends experienced raising his two eldest boys. Dickinson wrote to his sister, Mary, in Jamaica: ‘My son Jos[eph] is full of notion[s] of things afar of but...[I] shall keep him nere mee until hee hath a more solid Capacity to think Rightly for himself.’ Dickinson youngest son, John, apparently took after Joseph: ‘my son John I am asending him to a Country Schoole to ween him of from his towne companions being so taken up w[i]th Play that hee neglects his Learning.’ In an effort to level-out the impetuous Joseph, Dickinson sent him with George Claypool on a relatively short and safe trip to the 1715 the Society of Friends Yearly Meeting in Long Island. Dickinson’s eldest son, Jonathan, accompanied him on the trip as a chaperone.<sup>40</sup> While at Long Island, Jonathan met his future wife, Hannah Rodman, the sixteen-year-old daughter of Dr. John Rodman, a Quaker from Barbados.<sup>41</sup> This marriage undoubtedly served to further the development Dickinson’s business connections in both the mid-Atlantic and the Caribbean.

After the wedding, Dickinson took a more active role in his three sons’ lives. Dickinson planned to apprentice his youngest son John, aged 15 in 1716, for six years to Walter Newberry, a Boston merchant.<sup>42</sup> While Dickinson was still uncertain about John’s future, he conveyed to his brother-in-law, Isaac Gale, ‘wee have great hopes for

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<sup>40</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Walter Newberry, 14 June 1715.

<sup>41</sup> For background of Dr. John Roadman see, Charles Henry Jones, *Genealogy of the Rodman Family, 1620 to 1886* (Philadelphia, 1886). The two were married in May of 1716 in Flushing, Long Island. LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Richard Champion, 9 May 1716; LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to John Askew, 10 May 1716; LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Caleb Dickinson, 10 May 1716. Mary, Joseph, and John accompanied Dickson to the weeding celebration in Flushing, Long Island, New York while Mary and Hannah remained in Philadelphia LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Caleb Dickinson, 10 May 1716.

<sup>42</sup> Walter Newberry also married one of Dr. John Rodman’s daughters. Anne Rodman was Hannah elder sister born in 1689. Anne died in 1715.

his good temper and Character.’<sup>43</sup> Under the supervision of Newberry, John was supposed to travel to both England and Holland.<sup>44</sup> After the wedding, Hannah moved with Jonathan ‘about six miles out of town [Philadelphia] upon a plantation to which [they] seem to take heartily to.’<sup>45</sup> Dickinson suggested that Jonathan ‘contents himself at his country seat...taking pleasure in agriculture & husbandry.’<sup>46</sup> Dickinson’s heavy expenditure of capital and mortgaged assets on real-estate purchases, which he probably could not afford, represents a significant change in how Dickinson, and Quakers in general, typically operated during the eighteenth century. While Dickinson had occasionally overextended himself in the past, his real estate purchases during the 1710s clearly caused significant financial strain. Quakers generally had the reputation for operating modestly in business always being careful not to overextend themselves.<sup>47</sup>

While John, Dickinson’s youngest son, was apprenticed to Walter Newberry, Joseph was recommended to Thomas Mayleigh ‘which hee promised to observe’. Joseph, however, continued to pose problems in regard to his boisterous behaviour. Nevertheless, Dickinson eventually allowed Joseph to leave Pennsylvania in fall 1717, at age 22, to join his brother, John, in England.<sup>48</sup> Dickinson hoped that Joseph would take

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<sup>43</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Isaac Gale, 11 August 1716.

<sup>44</sup> He departed Philadelphia on 20 July 1716 but got stuck in Boston for the winter and did not arrive in London until the fall of 1717. LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Jonathan Gale, 21 August 1716; Dickinson to Jonathan Gale, 28 November 1715; Dickinson to Walter Newberry, 26 September 1717.

<sup>45</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Isaac Gale, 11 August 1716.

<sup>46</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Jonathan Gale, 7 September 1717.

<sup>47</sup> See Tolles, *Meeting House and Counting House*; Tolles, *Quakers in Atlantic Culture*; Nash, *Quakers and Politics*.

<sup>48</sup> Dickinson may have still been against his leaving because he did not accompany on his departure instead, ‘my wife went out of this town to accompany our son Joseph unto Chester where we parted with him ye 28<sup>th</sup> outward bound for London.’ LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Joseph Gale, 8 October 1717; Dickinson to Thomas Mayleigh, 23 November 1717.

‘Regular Courses to Improve his time Dureing his stay in great Brittain.’ He further suggested that the best course for Joseph ‘must be by Reading of men of this Age.’<sup>49</sup> Dickinson also implored John to acquaint himself with ‘as much mathematicks as he can attain.’<sup>50</sup> By the spring of 1718, Dickinson supposed John ‘seem[ed] inclinable to fix in London’ because he was ‘entreating’ Dickinson ‘to lett him to be apprentice with [their] kinsman Thomas Hyam at his counting house for 3 or 4 years’.<sup>51</sup> While in England, Dickinson’s closest factors, particularly John Askew in London and Richard Champion in Bristol, took care looking after the young men.<sup>52</sup> Dickinson suggested to Askew ‘should my sons have ye advantage of seeing some part of Holland under thy conduct will be to their great advantage & our great satisfaction.’<sup>53</sup> Dickinson clearly saw the advantage his sons might gain from traveling to various Atlantic-world ports but Dickinson denied Joseph’s many requests to travel to Jamaica. Dickinson advised his kin in England that ‘I am not for him going to Jamaica until he hath return to me [because] he hath not very well thought of the Clymate nor the Consequences that all ends.’<sup>54</sup> Steele suggests that it was ‘customary to send a kinsmen, apprentice, or junior partner...to become acquainted with customers of worth and local conditions in the market.’<sup>55</sup> Dickinson, however, clearly did not think Joseph fit to look after the family’s most profitable business of sugar

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<sup>49</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Thomas Mayleigh, 23 November 1717.

<sup>50</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Thomas Mayleigh, 2 May 1718; Dickinson to John Askew, 30 May 1718.

<sup>51</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to John Askew, 30 May 1718, LCP; Dickinson to Joshua Gale, 11 June 1718, LCP; Dickinson to Thomas Mayleigh, 2 May 1718.

<sup>52</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to John Askew, 24 March 1717; Dickinson to Richard Champion, 20 May 1718.

<sup>53</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to John Askew, 30 May 1718.

<sup>54</sup> Dickinson suggested that he ‘had rather he should take some time in England provided his Conduct be but agreeable & then return to us here.’ LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Thomas Maleigh, 2 June 1718; Dickinson to Thomas Hyam, 2 June 1718.

<sup>55</sup> Steele, *The English Atlantic*, p. 215.

planting in Jamaica. Moreover, the boys' misbehavior while abroad placed further stress on their father's relationships with his business associates in England, many of whom he was indebted to.

The boys' grandiose plans for traveling Europe and the Caribbean quickly fell through. Less than a year after departing Philadelphia, Joseph returned home after a brief trip to Holland.<sup>56</sup> John also returned to Philadelphia because Thomas Hyam refused to take on John as an apprentice. Thereafter, John decided to 'come home & take an American, tryall of pricticall experiments.'<sup>57</sup> John's actions in England clearly upset Dickinson. He admitted to Thomas Mayleigh, 'my son John he has Mispent his time, his weekness, had manifest to mee which whenever he comes to think will be with strong Relections on what his has misspent In time & money to Noe prospect.'<sup>58</sup> By 1720, however, John's experiences had satiated his desire to see the world. After his return he intended 'to be a planter' and take to the plantation Dickinson bought 'from the Commishoners of the Manor of springgittsbury.'<sup>59</sup> Dickinson wrote to his brother Caleb informing him of his youngest and oldest sons falling into line: 'boath [John and Jonathan] incline to a country living they have to each settlement about a thousand acres with a large quantity of cripple or meadow land which will in time be very profitable if they can improve ye same.'<sup>60</sup> This second large real estate purchase simply added to Dickinson's growing list of debts. Dickinson purchased the land for John's plantation

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<sup>56</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Isaac Gale, 27 August 1718; Dickinson to Isaac Gale, 27 September 1718; Dickinson to Thomas Hyam, 3 November 1718; LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Isaac Gale, 1 December 1718.

<sup>57</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Thomas Hyam, 3 November 1718.

<sup>58</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Thomas Mayleigh, 29 August 1719.

<sup>59</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Jonathan Gale, 7 July 1720.

<sup>60</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Caleb Dickinson, 5 December 1720.

from the Penn family for nearly £1,000. This debt would not be paid off until nearly a decade after Dickinson's death.

Joseph continued to lobby to go to Jamaica during the summer of 1719 but Dickinson refused to allow him to go.<sup>61</sup> When Dickinson's brother-in-law, Leonard Vassel arrived in Philadelphia in June 1719, Dickinson sent Joseph with Vassel who was making his way to Boston via New York and Rhode Island but continued to deny Joseph's request for Jamaica.<sup>62</sup> The actions of Dickinson's sons abroad probably added to the concerns of many of Dickinson's associates who were increasingly reluctant to deal with Dickinson considering his mercurial track record. Nevertheless in 1720, several months after Mary's death, Dickinson reluctantly accepted Joseph's plea to go to Jamaica; yet, he still expressed little faith in his second son.<sup>63</sup> He implored his brother-in-law, Isaac Gale, that 'should my son go [to Jamaica] he is not fitt to do anything but see the country and reconcile himself to itt & his Friends' but he also requested that Joshua Crosby find out 'what station for settlement may suite him best.'<sup>64</sup> Dickinson allowed Joseph six months in Jamaica 'to view ye country and inspect our interest and

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<sup>61</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to John Harriott, 2 June 1719.

<sup>62</sup> Jamaica remained out of the question. Joseph did make another trip along this same route in the spring 1720 to escort Vassel's youngest son, William, to New York. LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Dear Brother, 30 June 1719; LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Jonathan Gale, 21 April 1720.

<sup>63</sup> Dickinson suggested that 'my son Joseph intends to go to Jamaica with his cousin Jonathan [Gale] I shall leave him to his liberty therin.' LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Richard Champion, 28 August 1721.

<sup>64</sup> Dickinson wrote to his brother-in-law, Ezekiel Gomersall, hoping that Joseph would 'obtain thy favor in advice & council.' LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Isaac Gale, 6 July 1720; LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Ezekiel Gomersall, 24 September 1720; LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Joshua Crosby, 23 December 1720.

visit our friends and relations and return next summer.’<sup>65</sup> Joseph remained in Jamaica for more than a year, returning shortly before his father’s death in 1722.

In one of his final extant letters, Dickinson wrote to Joseph about life in Jamaica. He informed Joseph on how to ‘save commissions’ by loading directly at the Black River; how his father, Francis, came to own the family’s property in St. Elizabeth Parish; and of the best lands on their estates and potential prospects for planting. He also offered advice on sugar boiling and regulating his enslaved Africans. Dickinson revealed at least one family issue:

I have observed what thy mentions concerning EG I am apt to think that he hath an Evill Design against us for by all I can observe by is an envious spirit hath taken deep root in both of them and if Barton could be ruined he would consent there too. What should occasion this I know not But wee must guard against such designes.

He continued:

As to EG complaining the injustice of one half of fattening pasture The injustice hat been done to mee from ye yeare 1696. My brother Caleb hath had the benifitt of all untill 1702...they have not spared my timber nor grass on that 200 acres soe called in my patent.<sup>66</sup>

It appears that, Joseph, aged 23, was finally coming of age and in some ways was able to gain approval from his father. Dickinson’s family members, particularly those in Jamaica, however, seemed to be increasingly dissatisfied with Dickinson’s actions. Joseph’s nascent sense of independence and entitlement set the stage for his opposition to

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<sup>65</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Caleb Dickinson, 5 December 1720.

<sup>66</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Joseph Dickinson, 7 November 1721.



Dickinson's appointed executors and Dickinson's Jamaican family members. Joseph's trip to Jamaica probably exposed him to the value and extent of Dickinson's estate for the first time. Running plantations, as Burnard suggests, 'was hard work and required a hard man;' but Joseph had no experience running a plantation and from his actions and the tone of Dickinson's letters it is clear that he was certainly not a 'hard man'.<sup>67</sup> These shortcomings, however, did not deter Joseph laying claim to Dickinson's vast holdings in Jamaica after his father's death.

Joseph's correspondence from Jamaica, however, revealed much larger and more immediate concerns for Dickinson. Dickinson became aware of the necessity in visiting Jamaica to sort out a number of issues that had arisen during his decade-long absence. Dickinson, however, could not in good conscience, leave Philadelphia before he secured his two daughters and his three sons. While Jonathan and John had settled onto plantations outside Philadelphia, they were clearly not self-sufficient.<sup>68</sup> The young men could not provide for themselves and their plantations were several years away from becoming self-sustaining. Profitability, Dickinson admitted, remained uncertain. This lack of sustainability would haunt the executors of Dickinson's will for years. Moreover, Dickinson was either unwilling or incapable of dealing with his daughters as well. By the summer of 1720, Mary and Hannah were living with Jonathan and Hannah on their

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<sup>67</sup> Trevor Burnard, *Mastery, Tyranny, and Desire. Thomas Thistlewood and his Slaves in the Anglo-Atlantic World* (Chapel Hill, 2004). p. 183.

<sup>68</sup> At one point Dickinson requested Samuell Bayard to advance his son £5 to buy a horse. Dickinson also bought his son 100 sheep valued 'forty pounds New York currency' for his plantation. In 1720, he requested Richard Champion to secure 'husband men for Jonathan.' Dickinson continued to support both Jonathan and John. LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Samuell Bayard, 10 September 1719; LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Samuell Bayard, 23 September, 1719; LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Hendrick Hedrickson, 4 December 1719; LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Samuell Bayard, 22 December 1710; LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Richard Champion, 29 July 1720; Dickinson to Jonathan Gale, 5 July 1720.

plantation.<sup>69</sup> He could not, however, situate his daughters to his satisfaction: ‘ I would soone make up to go [to Jamaica] but thare semes some difacalty to have them well secured in my absence.’<sup>70</sup> He further lamented his troubles to his brother-in-law, Ezekiel Gomersall, ‘My two daughters for want of a guide to Instruct them at this their age Is a great part of my Daily thought with care and trouble.’<sup>71</sup> His daughters were deeply hurt by their mother’s passing, which only added to Dickinson’s troubles. He suggested to Mary’s brother, Jonathan Gale, ‘to my daughter mary the loss of her mother...hat sunk here into malancoly disposishons which adds to mine.’ He wrote to his brother-in-law, Isaac Gale, ‘I am settling a Plantation which my son Jonathan that made his choice to settle...all which chains me heare until I can wind up & settle my Family.’<sup>72</sup> Dickinson’s preoccupation with his children and his inability to maintain consistent correspondence with his business associate greatly contributed to his demise. Nevertheless, Dickinson suffered more from larger trans-Atlantic forces at work during the first decades of the eighteenth century.

### **Mercantile Reverses**

As a result of these particular personal difficulties during the fall and spring of 1719-20, Dickinson’s professional career and mercantile relationships suffered. Dickinson could not keep up with his correspondence, he could not maintain his accounts, and most importantly he could not visit Jamaica to set the course of his plantations straight. Dickinson was clearly distracted but the problems of 1719 did not spring upon him suddenly. Dickinson suffered a number of mercantile reverses, in part because of a poor

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<sup>69</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Jonathan Gale, 7 July 1720.

<sup>70</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Ezkiel Gomersall, 8 July 1720.

<sup>71</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Ezekiel Gomersall, 17 December 1720; LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Jonathan Gale, 5 July 1720.

<sup>72</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Isaac Gale, 6 July 1720.

sugar market and the mismanagement of his plantations, in part because of the impact of the South Sea Company Stock collapse in England, and in part because he had dramatically overreached himself in real estate purchases.

The declining state of his sugar plantations in Jamaica concerned Dickinson the most.<sup>73</sup> Sugar cultivation in Jamaica during the 1710s was still in its adolescence.<sup>74</sup>

Many of the problems planter experienced in the late-eighteenth century were far worse at the beginning of the century. In general, as Burnard suggests ‘the cost of entering the sugar trade were formidable.’ Sugar planting required substantial capital outlay but had the potential to generate enormous profits.<sup>75</sup> Dickinson’s experiences further suggest that maintaining the profitability of sugar planting required constant, disciplined attention. Extended absences or unreliable plantation managers could send a sugar plantation into economic ruin. Further compounding the problems in the early-eighteenth century, markets were unreliable and production was uncertain; Dickinson’s absence and his inconsistent contact with his Jamaican counterparts only further compounded these problems.<sup>76</sup> Nevertheless, much of Dickinson’s prosperity hinged on the productivity of

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<sup>73</sup> He further lamented to another brother-in-law, Ezekiel Gomersall, ‘My circumstances to my vew are very dull could I settle my affairs & family here I should readily make my visit to Jamaica but my eldest & youngest son both inclining to planting intrust here I am engag’d to establish them therein’ LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Ezekiel Gomersall, 8 July 1720. He suggested to John Harriott, his plantation manager that ‘I am inclining to settle my affairs heare that I might come unto you believing itt would accomodate some difficulties which cannot be well without my presence.’ LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to John Harriott, 9 July 1720.

<sup>74</sup> Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, pp. 149-187.

<sup>75</sup> Burnard, *Mastery, Tyranny, and Desire*, p. 64.

<sup>76</sup> In the summer of 1717 he received reports of ‘great produce from Barton and not so good at pepper.’ LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Joshua Gale, 7 September 1717. John Harriott was responsible for the production but Isaac Gale and Ezekiel Gomersall were responsible for shipping. Apparently Dickinson did not fully trust his brothers-in-law, because he asked Harriott to insure that they ‘take care in transporting it.’ LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to John Harriott, 7 September 1717.

his sugar estates; he borrowed against their returns and often carried a considerable debt. Adam Smith contended that the colonists contracted debt ‘not by borrowing upon the bond of the rich people of the mother country...but by running as much in arrear to correspondents will allow them’.<sup>77</sup> Richard Pares further argued that ‘the profits of plantations were the source which fed the indebtedness charged upon the plantations’.<sup>78</sup> Burnard suggests that debt was endemic in Jamaica and became a major problem from extravagant or unlucky planters during the late-eighteenth century; Dickinson happened to be both extravagant and unlucky.<sup>79</sup> Dunn suggests that ‘Jamaicans lived on credit to a great extent, and the assets of an apparently wealthy colonists might be entirely offset by his debts.’<sup>80</sup> Dunn characterised Jamaican planters by suggesting that they ‘mortgaged next year’s sugar crop on imported furniture, clothing, and plate and left an estate hopelessly entangled in debts.’<sup>81</sup> Dickinson perfectly illustrates Dunn’s Jamaican planter.

In bad years Dickinson could balance poor production and weak returns in Jamaica with his other mercantile pursuits. Having overextended himself in Pennsylvanian real estate and improvements, however, he was in considerable debt at the end of the 1710s and was increasingly dependent on the returns from his sugar estates. He noted, to his brother-in-law, Isaac Gale, that ‘I shall have most need of what money I

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<sup>77</sup> Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (London, 1776) quoted in S.D. Smith, *Slavery, Family, and Gentry Capitalism in the British Atlantic. The World of the Lascelles, 1648-1834* (Cambridge, 2006), p. 140.

<sup>78</sup> Richard Pares, *Merchants and Planters* (Cambridge, 1960), p. 47 quoted in Smith *Slavery, Family, and Gentry Capitalism in the British Atlantic*, p. 140. For further discussion about credit and debt in the British Atlantic see: Smith, *Slavery, Family, Gentry Capitalism in the British Atlantic*, pp. 139-225.

<sup>79</sup> Burnard, *Mastery, Tyranny, and Desire*, p. 65.

<sup>80</sup> Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, p. 265.

<sup>81</sup> Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, p. 271.

can raise of this years produce in London & little to Bristol if any.<sup>82</sup> The Jamaican estates, however, were not yielding what they had in the past. Dickinson explained to John Askew, that his:

Brother gave [him] full expectation & this year peper plantation made hardly two thirds of what last year...[his] part of Barton which had a very large cropp this yeare however to enlgard the strength...with Repairs have laid me under this straight.<sup>83</sup>

Eventually Dickinson reconciled his position: 'what this years cropp would have put into a Capacity of doing with; I must leave undon but I am not a stranger to Disappointment and must exercise temper with Patience.'<sup>84</sup> Recognising the problems with his plantations, when his wife fell ill, Dickinson requested that his brother-in-law, Isaac Gale ask Caleb to 'to lett me have out of Records of ye island the ccopy of my fathers conveyance to him which I have not yet seen of what Nature it is yet I may if it pleases God to permit me to putt things in ye best order for my famaly.'<sup>85</sup> Later he expressed that he was 'sensible of...the declining state of peper plantation' and entertained the idea of turning it 'into pasture & stock.'<sup>86</sup> Dickinson further advised his plantation manager at Barton, John Harriott, that 'pepper plantation these dry years sheweth its meane produce.' He asked Harriott to 'give me thy opinion of settling a Plantation' on land he held along the 'Grasy River.'<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Isaac Gale, 26 February 1717.

<sup>83</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to John Askew, 6 November 1717.

<sup>84</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to John Askew, 29 April 1719.

<sup>85</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Isaac Gale, 20 November 1719.

<sup>86</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Isaac Gale, 6 July 1720.

<sup>87</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to John Harriott, 9 July 1720.

Dickinson's plans for balancing his interests in Jamaica by reorganising his plantations stalled with the death of his long-time plantation manager, John Harriott. After the death of his plantation manager, Dickinson urgently needed to visit Jamaica but he could not in good confidence leave his daughters to the care of Jonathan's young wife.<sup>88</sup> He suggested to his London factor, John Askew:

could I settle my affaires here in some manner to Leave it I would accordingly to my Inclination take my coarse to London and Carry with me my daughters and their I would leave them to visit Jamaica and make a settlement of my affairs there.<sup>89</sup>

Thereafter, the future of Dickinson sugar estates in Jamaican remained uncertain. Joseph, however, saw Harriott's death as an opportunity to insert himself into a significant position of family power.

Dickinson's concerns about the returns from his sugar estates were further compounded by a household robbery on 24 November 1719 when James Moore 'took away about five or six hundred pounds in cash.'<sup>90</sup> To make matters worse the returns he expected from the sugar estates never came. Of the 159 hogsheads of sugar shipped from

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<sup>88</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Eastwick and Gale, 23 September, 1720; LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Ezekiel Gomersall, 24 September 1720.

<sup>89</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to John Askew, 27 September 1720; By August 1721, however, Dickinson's 'indisposition rendered [him] incapable of going abroad.' LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Richard Champion, 28 August 1721.

<sup>90</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Richard Champion, 27 November 1719; Dickinson to John Askew, 28 November 1719; Dickinson to Thomas Mayleigh, 28 November 1719). Eventually authorities captured the Moore but Dickinson to ever see the money again. Moore was eventually arrested and placed in jail at Annapolis after he 'committed severall Roberies in the Jaresys and the las was on old Thomas Sheckell and his Wife both of them this Villian had almost murthered & then Broken the locks & Robbed them of What little money they had.' LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Thomas Hyam, 29 November 1719; LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Joseph Dickinson, 7 November 1721; LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Jonathan Gale, 7 July 1720; LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Joseph Dickinson, 7 November 1721.

Jamaica to London, seventy-seven valued at £1388.19 sold for £607.07.08 in London with Thomas Mayleigh and the remaining sixty-two valued at £1136.8.3 in Jamaica sold in London with John Askew for £473.03.8. The falling market left Dickinson in debt to Thomas Mayleigh by £170.15.10. Dickinson had previously sold thirty-one hogsheads of sugar to a sugar refiner in London valued at £743.01.01 but a 'week after an extent came against him & all he had was seized & at length compounded at 5/3 per pound.' After which, Dickinson was in John Askew's debt nearly £1000.<sup>91</sup> Dickinson was 'schoked by [the] terrible sale of sugar.'<sup>92</sup> In 1721 Dickinson wrote to Richard Champion, to whom he was also in debt, 'should sugars rise with you it may give me hopes of getting out of debt where from I am painfully concern'd to extricate myself one trouble with another had press me much under.' Dickinson continued, 'As to thy Enquiry after husbandmen till times mend & trade flourish we have little encourgment.'<sup>93</sup>

The stock bubble created by rampant speculation in the South Seas Company further exacerbated the financial burden created by the robbery and his losses 'at land and sea'. He thought that 'its thought suger may rise if Stock jobbing would fall...ye rise of ye South Sea Stock is a misery to us here.'<sup>94</sup> Dickinson rightly perceived the impending doom of the South Sea stock crash:

I hope their will not be occasion to race out of Brittain and putt a Bethlem ye fittest plac for many that are running into stocks and Bubles which to us seems ye Disstruction must upon many with you and prove fatall to us in all ye plantacions form when this devouring stock fatall to us in all ye Bubbles then wee may expect

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<sup>91</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Isaac Gale, 6 July 1720.

<sup>92</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Thomas Mayleigh, 28 July 1720.

<sup>93</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Richard Champion, 28 August 1721.

<sup>94</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Thomas Hyam, 30 September 1720.

to feele ye force yet power yet will have all abroad and at home under their  
check who will governe trade in all its Branches is greatly feared.<sup>95</sup>

In October 1720, Dickinson wrote to his brother implying that ‘stock and  
jobbing...is said to advance some mens fortunes and sink others.’ Ironically, his brother,  
Caleb, made a vast amount of money trading South Seas Company stock.<sup>96</sup> Dickinson  
wrote to Richard Champion about his brother: ‘I have ye report yet he hath greatly  
profited by a purchase in South Sea Stock which is said he sold of ye value of £35000.’  
Dickinson inquired, ‘if he would lend me a sum to support my losses that I have  
sustained in a little above a year past which I may compute to be about two thousand  
pounds.’ He further lamented that he had ‘experience[d] this before as to be acquainted  
with such losses’<sup>97</sup> Dickinson could do little to change this larger force working against  
the price of sugar. Therefore, his main source of income, as it had been many previous  
times, was at the mercy of uncertain markets in England. Larger Atlantic forces created  
detours that upset traditional avenues for prosperity; therefore Dickinson, under  
seemingly insurmountable debt, was forced to find new opportunities.

As illustrated in previous chapters, Dickinson consistently dealt with the  
uncertainty of the Atlantic marketplace. Three years, however, clearly stood out over the  
rest. The shipwreck in Florida in 1696 (chapter three), being captured by French  
privateers in 1709 (chapter four), and the multiplicity of problems he faced in 1719,  
Dickinson admitted, were the worst times of his life.<sup>98</sup> He expressed his concern to  
Thomas Mayleigh:

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<sup>95</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Thomas Mayleigh, 29 September 1720.

<sup>96</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Caleb Dickinson, 22 October 1720.

<sup>97</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Richard Champion, 30 November 1720.

<sup>98</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Isaac Gale, 23 December 1720.



But there seems soe great yet a desidence is dangerously insuing in ye year 1696  
1709 & 1719 during those years I have had Large experimented Tryall and in ye  
strength of hope I may gett forward without turning my mind to ye wright left of  
backward.<sup>99</sup>

Six months later he continued:

am straightened as was at such another pinch when I came last from Jamaica  
being taken by ye French who accounted for me aboute sixteen thousand besides  
what plundering their was & my expencies that follwed before I goot to writes  
with my famaly this was in 1709 and I must say 1719 hath made a deeper  
impression on my mind.<sup>100</sup>

In December 1720 he wrote to Caleb, ‘this leads me to a thought off asking thee  
the question of lending me a sum of two or three thousand pounds in being said thou hast  
successfully improved ye sum thou putt into South Sea Stock.’<sup>101</sup> He lobbied with Caleb  
for the loan ‘to promote my interest here & save my credit with my friends.’<sup>102</sup> Caleb did  
not agree to his request. Evidently, Dickinson and Caleb did not have a good relationship  
and Caleb’s refusal to support Dickinson in this predicament only made matters worse.  
Dickinson did not write very often to his brother and in the last years of his life the letters  
became even more infrequent. Dickinson was clearly hurt by this and wrote to Isaac Gale  
in the spring of 1721 explaining ‘the deplorable calamity that has happened by South Sea  
Stock [which] ruin’d trade [and] sunk ye currency of many...the destruction of familys

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<sup>99</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Thomas Mayleigh, 28 July 1720.

<sup>100</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Thomas Mayleigh, 6 December 1720.

<sup>101</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Caleb Dickinson, 5 December 1720.

<sup>102</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Thomas Hyam, 6 December 1720.

by that bubble of stock is surprising.’<sup>103</sup> In August 1721, Dickinson lamented the fact that ‘South Sea and Mississippi have ruined trade in America.’<sup>104</sup> He further lamented to Richard Champion, ‘The turne of times at hoe with you wee are like to be made deeply sencible whereof in North America friends money and credit are vanishe....we our much over balanced in our Trade and those that pursue at will be sencible thereof.’<sup>105</sup> In the end, he abhorred the ‘Destruction of Familys by that bubble of Stock.’ Dickinson was clearly upset by his brother’s unwillingness to support him in his time of greatest need. The personal and professional hardships Dickinson experienced at the end of the 1710s hindered him from successfully completing many of his tasks. He wrote to his brother-in-law, Ezekiel Gomersal, that ‘I am growing heavey and dull to everything thee losses yet I have lately had, bary mee down yet I am hardly fitt for business.’<sup>106</sup>

The problems Dickinson experienced in the final years of his life further illustrate the difficulties of conducting trans-Atlantic business. Dickinson simply could not be in multiple places at once and his personal and professional relationships suffered as a result. During his absences, both physical and psychological, his affairs suffered. His insatiable desire to expand his holdings created multiple occasions during which time greatly overextended his accounts. Real estate purchases in Pennsylvania and poor returns from Jamaica compounded his problems and left his estate in almost insurmountable debt. On the exterior, Dickinson maintained the appearance of a wealthy merchant but this façade rested uneasily on the precipice of a mountain of debt, which the executors of his will were forced to scale in the years following his death.

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<sup>103</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Isaac Gale, 10 May 1721.

<sup>104</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to John May, 21 August 1721.

<sup>105</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Richard Champion, 7 November 1721.

<sup>106</sup> LCP, JDLB, Dickinson to Ezekiel Gomersall, 17 December 1720.

## Settling Dickinson's Estate

During this unfortunate string of events, Dickinson fell ill in the winter of 1721. He died the following summer on 16 June 1722. James Logan wrote to Isaac Gale: 'it is with real grief that we are to inform thee of ye decease of our good friend...after an inward waste and looseness for some months.'<sup>107</sup> Five children survived Dickinson: Jonathan, Joseph, John, Mary, and Hannah. Despite his sons being of legal age, Dickinson, clearly understanding the chaotic state of his affairs and with the best intentions for his children's welfare, appointed his three closest friends and business associates, Isaac Norris, James Logan, and George Claypool, as the executors of his will and guardians of his youngest daughter Hannah. Norris, Logan, Claypool, collectively possessed decades of trans-Atlantic business experience and were certainly capable, albeit reluctant, to settle Dickinson's estate.<sup>108</sup> He appointed his brother-in-law, Isaac Gale, as his executor in Jamaica.

Norris, anticipating problems, initially refused to become an executor 'but had not Resolution enough to resist, when a Languishing Fr[ien]d took [his] hand in his and w[i]th a Mournfull Sinking Voice said "will my friend forsake me at last."<sup>109</sup> When

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<sup>107</sup> HPS, Logan Family Papers, James Logan Letter Book, 1717-28, James Logan to Isaac Gale, 26 June 1722.

<sup>108</sup> The executors suggested to Isaac Gale that Dickinson 'who had his childrens interest deeply at heart could not think ym fit to undertake that charge (for he would by no means hear of it) it would not be just in us to devolve that trust upon them after we had by forebearing a flat and peremptory refusal given him an expectation of our discharging it and had suffered him to continue in it till his last moments the young men if we ye may name more than one had false and with evil counselors some of whom it was thought had a design of then the estate would before ye younger children defrauded and their fathers reputation in all probability deeply suffer.' HSP, Logan Family Papers, Letters of Jonathan Dickinson Estate, Box 45, Norris, Logan, Claypool to Isaac Gale, 6 August 1722.

<sup>109</sup> Isaac Norris quoted in Horle, 'Jonathan Dickinson', in *Lawmakers and Legislators*, p. 327.

Norris called on him to appoint his sons instead, Dickinson retorted: ‘then all will be torn to pieces.’<sup>110</sup> Logan suggested that ‘it was extremely unhappy that his circumstances here obliged him to think of any other executors and that his estate would not immediately be distributed among his children. Logan continued ‘his debts...would be so uneasy that we would not accept of it without reluctance.’<sup>111</sup> Evidently, Dickinson thought his sons were incapable of managing the settlement of his complicated business affairs. While his sons, particularly Joseph, thought otherwise, they had almost no business experience and what little experience they had was neither particularly successful nor encouraging to Dickinson.

Therefore, the convoluted task of settling Dickinson’s estate passed to Norris, Logan, and Claypool. The complications were threefold. First, Dickinson’s estate held heavy encumbrances that needed to be settled before his children could receive their inheritances. In all Dickinson was indebted to various parties for at least £4,000. Furthermore, the debts were widely dispersed and difficult to settle according to provisions outlined in Dickinson’s will. He owed around £1,000 to three separate parties, John Askew, his main factor in London, Archibald Hope in Rotterdam, both for goods unpaid, and William Penn’s family for unpaid land sales in Pennsylvania. Dickinson owed the remaining £1,000, in relatively small increments, to various parties around the

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<sup>110</sup> Norris was more straightforward with Caleb Dickinson suggested that Dickinson ‘foresaw ye confusion which would ensue his leaving all or any of his sons executors and would not hear of it when noticed to him by some of us both in our own excuse & considering they were all of age, how odd it would look as well as ye trouble we conceived would arise to us in being concern’d for such grown & heady Infants—Joseph was newly arrived from Jamaica being full of his own abilities & merit. I presume expected ye trust but when he found his fathers averse & our refusal for some week seem’d to endanger his dying without a will.’ HSP, Norris Family Papers, Norris Letterbook, Isaac Norris to Caleb Dickinson, 21 September 1723.

<sup>111</sup> HSP, LFP, JLLB, James Logan to Isaac Gale, 26 June 1722.

Atlantic world including debts in England, Madeira, Jamaica, Pennsylvania, and several North American colonies.

The main complication regarded how and in what order the debts were to be paid. The laws of Pennsylvania called for his debt to the Penn family to be paid first but Dickinson clearly wanted the executors to leave selling his real estate in Pennsylvania to the last. Therefore, Dickinson planned to pay his debts by using the profits from the sugar estates in Jamaica. This posed two problems. First, the estates were yielding comparatively light profits, while the plantations were also in need of considerable maintenance. Second, the sugar would have to be sold in London via a factor. Unfortunately, Dickinson was heavily indebted to his main factor in London, John Askew, for nearly £1,000 and any sugar he received he would clearly put toward settling his own accounts rather than forwarding it on the executors in Pennsylvania. Therefore the executors had to decline using:

John Askew at ye present...[because] he has a demand by account upon the estate not yet fully settled and it was reasonable to think he would have apply all the first effects to the discharge of it. We hope in one time he will be fully paid but as we are obliged boath by law and prudence first to discharge those two debts of Archibold Hopes and the trustees of our proprietor.<sup>112</sup>

The Hopes of Rotterdam appeared to be the most demanding of Dickinson's creditors but the laws of Pennsylvania restricted the executors in their ability to settle their account. Oddly enough several months before Dickinson's death the Hopes began the legal process of securing a judgment against Dickinson. Evidently, the Hopes paid

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<sup>112</sup> HSP, LFP, LJDE, Norris, Logan, Claypool to Jonathan Gale, 20 July 1724.

the cost for Dickinson's mercantile neglect in the last years of his life. James Logan thought:

of all these parts of this troublesome business there is nothing more perplexing to us than the Debt to the Hopes of Rotterdam who before they could know anything about thy Brothers decease gave such very angry order to their attorney whom they choose only as wee suppose for his reputation and Eminence in the Law that is have exceedingly Embarrac'd us for had he followed his directions he would have spar'd nothing<sup>113</sup>

Therefore, coming up with money to settle Dickinson's debts with the Hopes was difficult and apparently took too long:

In that imperfect list of Debts...wee call that to the Hopes of Rotterdam about £800 of their Money but their attorney having their order sued us for it...settled at it £1057:12:10 for which they have now obtained a judgement. As these men (the Hopes) are exceedingly angry about this affair and are for allowing no favour wee shall be very much situated how to gett their demand answered the debt is now about £ 800 sterling<sup>114</sup>

Second, Dickinson's sons, particularly Joseph, actively resisted the executors' attempts to settle his father's affairs because they thought Alexander Hamilton and the executors were bamboozling them out of their inheritances. They cited the sloppy nature of their father's will and the executors attempting to mortgage or sell property in Pennsylvania to settle debts. Since this property comprised the bulk of their inheritance, Dickinson's sons collectively attempted to keep the executors from getting a true sense of

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<sup>113</sup> HSP, LFP, LJDE, James Logan to Isaac Gale, 23 September 1723.

<sup>114</sup> HSP, LFP, LJDE, Norris, Logan, Claypool to Isaac Gale, 1 July 1723.

the value of the land, the buildings, and their contents.<sup>115</sup> Dickinson drafted his will on 8 June 1722, just a week before his death. Dickinson's eldest son, Jonathan, was the main beneficiary of his estate. Dickinson bequeathed the more profitable sugar estate in Jamaica, Barton, which he held in common with his brother, Caleb to Jonathan. From the profits of the plantation, Jonathan was to pay his younger brother, John, £750. He was also to pay £750 to Mary, and £500 to Norris, Logan, and Claypool for Hannah out of the profits. These relatively large sums of money to be taken out of the profits from Barton seem unreasonable considering the debts Dickinson already owed. Joseph was to receive two-thirds of Pepper plantation, which Dickinson openly admitted was in decline and perhaps better suited for pasture; the other third was given to John who was to pay £750 to Hannah and £500 for Mary out of the profits. Evidently, Dickinson felt his sugar planting could not only settle his outstanding debts but they could also provide considerable sums of money for the maintenance of his children. It does not seem that Dickinson intended for his children to relocate to Jamaica; he simply envisioned them excising the wealth from the plantations while remaining in Pennsylvania. Dickinson's intention for his children to be absentee planters suggests that his family had come a long way since his father's arrival in Jamaica during the conquest. Nevertheless, many problems plagued the sugar estates as Dickinson's nephews came to find out nearly twenty years later when they inherited all of the Dickinson family holdings in Jamaica.

As for his property in Pennsylvania, Dickinson gave Jonathan and his wife Hannah, 'all his plantation land near Frankford on both sides of the Creek with all the stock Negroes thereon.' After all his debts were paid, Dickinson gave Joseph the 'Bank

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<sup>115</sup> Further complicating the matter, during the last years of Dickinson's life he turned over his bookkeeping to a second party, which added complications to the convoluted estate.

Water Lot, Store & Warves with his lots lying opposite of Westside Front Street & several Negroes.’ John was to receive ‘the Vineyard Plantation (still unpaid for) & Land bought of Commissers of Property...with several Negroes.’ Hannah was to receive the ‘general House in Chestnut Street...and some Negroes.’ Dickinson requested that Isaac Norris, James Logan, & George Claypool & his Heirs ‘for ever his messuage & Lot in Front Street in possession of William Dellworth, & the £1000 order’d to be paid him by his sons Jonathan, Joseph, & John out of Jamaica Estate In Trust for separate use of Mary (who he say marry’d without his consent) during her husbands Life, & then to her & her Heirs of her Body remainder to Hannah.’<sup>116</sup>

Dickinson drafted an earlier will but the death of his wife rendered it ineffectual.<sup>117</sup> As a consequence his legal will, completed several days before Dickinson’s death by Alexander Hamilton, was extraordinarily sloppy with filled-in blanks, mistaken pronouns, and erroneous amounts to be held in trust for his daughter Mary, all of which prompted Dickinson’s eldest’s sons, Jonathan and Joseph, to enter a caveat with Register General, Peter Evans, to prevent probate until their objections were heard ‘against the Validity of the Said Will.’ On 26 June 1722, Hamilton deposed that the apparent sloppiness of the will was caused by last minute decisions on the appointment of trustees and executors and by simple oversights, rather than by any sinister motives. Ultimately, the will was declared valid and the task of executing it was

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<sup>116</sup> HSP, LFP, Abstract of Jonathan Dickinson’s Will.

<sup>117</sup> James Logan suggested that ‘while living the last summer of her [Mary] life she was extremely solicitous to have her husbands affairs...She was then anxious to have hime which in health to make his will...The will was nearly complete but her decease rendered all that had been done ineffectual...About 12 months after her death I began again to putt thy Brother in Law in mind of his good will...but he delayed it from time to time till his prevailing weakness convinced him of the necessity.’ HSP, LFP, JLLB, James Logan to Isaac Gale, 4 September 1722.



passed, to the dismay of the elder Dickinson brothers, on to Norris, Logan, and Claypool.<sup>118</sup> Therefore, Dickinson's wishes and Joseph's actions when combined with the uncertainties of the Philadelphia market place and unreliable returns from the Jamaican sugar estates coalesced into a convoluted mess of problems for the executors that dragged on for nearly four decades.

Despite his personal hardships, Dickinson added greatly to his possessions in Jamaica and Pennsylvania during the first two decades of the eighteenth century. By virtue of his ability to negotiate the uncertainties of the early-eighteenth century Atlantic world, Dickinson participated in the formative processes that engendered a class of colonial aristocrats in Pennsylvania. Nash suggests that 'overseas trade [and] land speculation...were the main sources of wealth which helped create these Quaker grandees'.<sup>119</sup> Dickinson, of course, actively participated in both.

Expanding his estate in Pennsylvania property was evidently far more important to him than expanding his property in Jamaica, which he shared jointly with his brother, Caleb. By 1720, Dickinson had invested nearly £5,000 in real estate and improvements in Pennsylvania purchasing more than twenty-five properties.<sup>120</sup> Dickinson's desire to

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<sup>118</sup> Horle, 'Jonathan Dickinson', in *Lawmakers and Legislators*, p. 323

<sup>119</sup> Nash, *Quakers and Politics*, p. 322.

<sup>120</sup> In all, he purchased within the city of Philadelphia at least 3 properties on the Delaware River bank, as well as twenty lots and seven houses, primarily between High Street and Cedar Street, east of Third Street. These properties were added to his original purchases from 1702 which included a partially built wharf between Walnut and Spruce Streets, and across from it on the west side of Front Street, a house and large lot which extended to Dock Creek. He also purchased at least 300 acres in Gloucester Township, West New Jersey; twenty-one acres (with Isaac Norris) near Ridley Creek and 216 acres near Chester Mills, both in Chester county; and the Vineyard and 1,084 acres in Springettsbury Manor, 500 acres in Limerick Township, 133 acres in Passyunk Township, 727 acres and two house along Tacony Creek, primarily in Frankford, 206 acres on Mill Creek, and 214 acres in Wicaco and Moyamensing, all in Philadelphia County. Moreover, he owned almost one-half of the Chester Mills, along with twenty-

expand in holding in Philadelphia may have resulted from relatively cheap and available land in Pennsylvania. In comparison, land in Jamaica was far more expensive and perhaps he and his brother were more interested there in purchasing enslaved Africans to improve the land they already possessed. Clearly aware of the nature of his large debt to the Penn family, Dickinson, on his deathbed, implored the executors to ‘have his debts paid as speedily as possible to save from Tearing to pieces such parts of his estates in this country [Pennsylvania] which have been procured and so farr improved.’<sup>121</sup> Tolles suggests that real estate produced smaller returns, but ‘its safety and the fact that it required relatively little attention recommended it to those Quaker merchants who wished to retire devote themselves to religious, philanthropic, and political pursuits.’<sup>122</sup>

Dickinson’s speculation in real estate may have been spurred on by his close friend Norris’ impressive real-estate portfolio in Philadelphia and the surrounding hinterland.<sup>123</sup>

Dickinson’s household effects totaled just over £1,000 and the contents of his store and yard around £950. In the final inventory Dickinson’s personal property totaled £1,978.17<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>.<sup>124</sup> Many of the goods in his possession could not be utilised to satisfy his creditors because they carried debts with them as well as for shipments ordered. The most tangible asset the estate possessed was £203 worth of silver plate (594 ounces) but the executors worked tirelessly to preserve that for Dickinson’s children. The merchandise in the store consisted of hardware, dry-goods, notions, cabinet hardware, skins, rum, wine, lumber, timber, and seaman’s goods.

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seven acres on which they stood. Horle, ‘Jonathan Dickinson’, in *Lawmakers and Legislators*, p. 316.

<sup>121</sup> HSP, LFP, LJDE, Norris, Logan, and Claypool to Isaac Gale, 25 June 1722.

<sup>122</sup> Tolles, *Meeting House and Counting House*, p.95.

<sup>123</sup> Tolles, *Meeting House and Counting House*, p. 95.

<sup>124</sup> HSP, MDLP, Dickinson Estate Inventory; Gillingham, ‘The Estate of Jonathan Dickinson’, p. 421

The inventory of his household goods provides insight into the Dickinson's standard of living. Almost every room of his 'handsome city house' contained mahogany furniture of the finest quality. Tea-tables, satin-cushioned easy chairs, caned elbowchairs, expensive clocks, looking glasses, and occasional pieces graced his parlors. It is worth mentioning that exotic woods were not common in the colonies during the early eighteenth century.<sup>125</sup> As early as 1699, Dickinson began importing logwood from the circum-Caribbean, which he no doubt had his furniture made.<sup>126</sup> In the bedrooms were featherbeds with 'Inside and outside Curtains, Vailings, head & Tester Clothes'. His table displayed elaborate settings of china and silver, Oznabrigg napkins, and expensive glassware. The kitchens contained leather chairs, brass candlesticks, and dozens of culinary apparatuses. Dickinson's library, perhaps one of the largest in early-eighteenth century Philadelphia, was not itemized but it was valued at just over £28.<sup>127</sup> In the stable stood horses and one of the first four-wheeled carriages in Philadelphia.<sup>128</sup>

This list of assets does much more than reveal Dickinson's standard of living. More importantly, it illustrates an emblematic change in the way wealthy Quakers self-identified. As their wealth and influence grew, Quakers embraced more fashionable apparel and paid careful attention to the furnishing of houses in the style of upper-class Englishmen.<sup>129</sup> Despite all these opulent assets, Dickinson's estate was in shambles.

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<sup>125</sup> Tolles, *Meeting House and Counting House*, p. 128

<sup>126</sup> Dickinson also sold mahogany planks to John Johns and Abraham Hopper, both local cabinet-makers. Gillingham, 'The Estate of Jonathan Dickinson', p. 422.

<sup>127</sup> Tolles, *Meeting House and Counting House*, p. 158.

<sup>128</sup> Nash, *Quakers and Politics*, p. 324.

<sup>129</sup> Nash, *Quakers and Politics*, p. 323.

Several years earlier in 1711 after a long period of bad markets in Philadelphia, Norris suggested that ‘few if any here can pretend’ to the status of ‘Rich Quakers.’<sup>130</sup>

Successfully collecting profits from sugar sales, collecting debts owed to Dickinson, finding markets for goods remaining in the store and yard, and soliciting buyers for the real estate proved to be an enormous task. The executors suggested to Dickinson’s brother-in-law, Isaac Gale, that ‘we are able to discharge ye debt but very slowly through the general backwardness of people pay here and ye many discounts brought by shopkeepers against the estate.’<sup>131</sup> A year after Dickinson’s death, the executors, unable to come up with the money to settle his debts, advertised some of Dickinson’s property for sale in *American Weekly Mercury*.<sup>132</sup> They ran the advertisement for several weeks during the summer of 1723 and again in February and March of 1724.<sup>133</sup> Much to the dismay of Dickinson’s sons, the executors were theoretically going against Dickinson’s final wishes by selling off his property in Pennsylvania. The executors quickly suggested that Dickinson:

lived and died with the reputation of a great estate, which in effect is true, yet he had by means of some concurring accidents unhappily to far involv’d himself

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<sup>130</sup> HSP Norris Family Papers, Norris Letter Book, 1709-1716, Norris to Joseph Pike, 29 November 1711 quoted in Nash, *Quakers and Politics*, p. 325.

<sup>131</sup> HSP, LFP, LJDE, Norris, Logan, Claypool to Isaac Gale, 1 July 1723.

<sup>132</sup> The following Lands and Tenements, being part of the Estate of Jonathan Dickinson Deceased; are to be Sold by Isaac Norris, James Logan, and George Claypool, Executors of the Last Will of said Jonathan Dickinson, viz. Five hundred Acres of Land in the County of Philadelphia. One hundred and Thirty three Acres lying on the Road from Philadelphia to S. Blunston’s Ferry commonly called Duckers Land. A house on Society-Hill where John Berrison now Dwells. With Eleven Lots. A House in Chestnut Street where Charles Brockdon lives. A Lot Running on the back thereof; an of several other Adjoyning Tenements. Fifteen Two and thirtieth Parts of the Grist-Mills and Saw-Mill on Chester Creek commonly called Chester-Mills. And one Moiety of the Plantation adjoining, which was formerly Caleb Pusey’s. As also Sundry valuable Household, and other Goods.’ LCP, *American Weekly Mercury*, 6 June 1723, no. 182

<sup>133</sup> See *American Weekly Mercury* editions: 185, 188, 220, and 223.

before his decease that a frugal management is now become necessary until the incumbrances are cleared.<sup>134</sup>

Writing to Dickinson's brother-in-law, Isaac Gale, several weeks after his death the executors advised that 'It is not possible for us as yet to give thee any certainty or hardly an estimate of his debts in the state of his affairs his books...[are in] no clear order and are behind [with] many accounts open and unsettled.'<sup>135</sup> They further lamented Dickinson's condition at the time of his death suggesting that:

at no time these many years had our deceased Friend less of effects or Mercandize than at this of his decease...Money which will go but little way in the immediate occasions. The stores are generally empty and...goods brought in by Joseph he claims as his own though at length he promis'd to submit what he has left unsold to the service.<sup>136</sup>

The executors alluded here that the biggest problem came from Dickinson's children. From the outset the children posed several problems. First, none of them were self-sufficient. Furthermore, they complained that 'Jonathan's (Sr.) family also having been always accustomed to an expensive way gives them and us an uneasiness.'<sup>137</sup> Without Dickinson doling out funds to his children, they were forced to quell their extravagant lifestyle. The executors suggested that Jonathan, 'tho[ugh] married and settled hath hitherto so much depended on his Father for support that he tells us he wants an immediate supply,' and continued: 'Jonathan and his family who are in no way of getting anything of value from their plantation will be exceedingly strained this next

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<sup>134</sup> HSP, LFP, LJDE, Logan and Claypool to Thomas Rodman, 7 September 1722.

<sup>135</sup> HSP, LFP, LJDE, Norris, Logan, Claypool to Isaac Gale, 25 June 1722.

<sup>136</sup> HSP, LFP, LJDE, Norris, Logan, Claypool to Isaac Gale, 25 June 1722.

<sup>137</sup> HSP, LFP, LJDE, Norris, Logan, Claypool to Isaac Gale, 1 July 1723.

winter unless some such supplies come before the fall.’<sup>138</sup> As for the Dickinson daughters, the executors informed Isaac Gale that, ‘Hannah is to be placed at a school out of her former acquaintance who were a disadvantage to her...Mary will want much more than the rent of the house allotted for her.’<sup>139</sup> The children collectively were not accustomed to worrying about financial matters, which were now a major source of concern.

Second, some children, particularly Joseph, actively resisted the efforts of the executors to settle Dickinson’s estate. During the very first stage of settling the estate, Joseph blocked the executors from taking a proper inventory of Dickinson’s estate because the will indicated certain goods were to be given to Joseph as part of his inheritance. They related to Isaac Gale that ‘we began amicably...to proceed in taking the inventory but it lasted not for he [Joseph] quickly renew’d his opposition and kept possession of the house and all the goods in it.’<sup>140</sup> Joseph apparently laid claim to a large part of Dickinson’s estate that he did not have a legal right to. The executors suggested that ‘Joseph Dickinson maid some claim to halfe of it but he has already got a great deal

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<sup>138</sup> HSP, LFP, LJDE, Norris, Logan, Claypool to Isaac Gale, 25 June 1722.

<sup>139</sup> HSP, LFP, LJDE, Norris, Logan, Claypool to Isaac Gale, 6 August 1722; Hannah was sent to live with Jonathan’s wife’s father, Thomas Rodman in Rhode Island. Upon her departure the executors wrote to Rodman: ‘to pursue her father’s resolutions in his lifetime which were to place her out at some distance from the acquaintance she had contacted after her mother’s decease for which purpose above all other places he proposed Rhode Island encouraged we suppose by some hopes he might have conceived from some of this and thy relations that the child might find a reception with thee and be under they wife’s immediate care or at least by your means be recommend to that of some other friend with whom she might be conveniently and advantageously placed. HSP, LFP, LJDE, Logan and Claypool to Thomas Rodman, 7 September 1722.

<sup>140</sup> HSP, LFP, LJDE, Norris, Logan, Claypool to Isaac Gale, 6 August 1722. On 17 July 1722, the executors wrote to Joseph Dickinson to request the key of the house and store house: ‘to inventorying the Estate and gett the books possed up that wee may be able to as soone as possible know the Debts and Credit but finding the doors lock’d up and understanding the key are in thy possession we desire thee to bring or send them to us.’ HSP, LFP, LJDE, Norris, Logan, Claypool, to Joseph Dickinson 17 July 1722.

of the estate into his hands which appears not to belong to him.’<sup>141</sup> More specifically Joseph claimed ownership of a ship from Boston:

to which he produces a letter from his father to him when in Jamaica informing him of the cost of the ship that he held a quarter and that Joseph if he pleases might hold a part with him which claim he things he strengthens by saying he has the bill of sale in his hands.<sup>142</sup>

Just as Joseph laid claim to assets in Dickinson’s storehouse, several other children refused to relinquish assets they believed to be their own.<sup>143</sup> For example:

the Negroes left to ye Children when the debt are paid for they account them theirs...while others (of more skill perhaps) affirm they are assets in our hands for which wee must be accountable and that they are liable (as undoubtedly they are) to be taken in Execution yet none of the children will agree to have the respective shares questioned.<sup>144</sup>

Nevertheless, the executors were caught in two minds about what to do. They explained to Isaac Gale they thought ‘there would be sufficient [money] to answer all the debts and

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<sup>141</sup> HSP, LFP, LJDE, Norris, Logan, Claypool to Isaac Gale, 20 November 1722.

<sup>142</sup> HSP, LFP, LJDE, Norris, Logan, Claypool, to Isaac Gale, 8 November 1722.

<sup>143</sup> The children persisted in their leaving Philadelphia charging their travel to the estate. John was eager to go to Jamaica during Dickinson’s life but his father resisted. Shortly after his death, however, John departed for Jamaica while Joseph offered the most opposition to the executors. George Claypool apparently had a soft spot for Hannah whom he wrote to offering advice to ‘keep good company and be modest.’ HSP, LFP, LJDE, George Claypool to Hannah Dickinson, 19 March 1722/23. Claypool sold 25 casks for flour for her provision while under the care of Thomas Rodman. Claypool also requested that ‘if it pleased’ Rodman that ‘it would be to her advantage to try another summer with you.’ HSP, LFP, LJDE, George Claypool to Thomas Rodman, 6 September 1723. A year later ‘We have already mentioned thy cousin Jonathan and his Family his sister Hannah is at present very well placed with his wife’s uncle Thomas Rodman in Rhode Island from whom wee have a pretty good account of her.’ HSP, LFP, LJDE, Norris, Logan, Claypool to Isaac Gale, 1 July 1723.

<sup>144</sup> HSP, LFP, LJDE, Norris, Logan, Claypool to Isaac Gale, 1 July 1723.

leave a hand some provisions from the children under almost any management.’ Yet, the executors lamented that they struggled ‘against the opposition given us by those very children and labour against their will for their good at ye expence of our own quite and ease.’<sup>145</sup> Nevertheless, their commitment to Dickinson and his family remained strong; they remarked that:

It is an unpleasant task to speak to the disadvantage of any part of the family we think ourselves obliged to serve...but wee cannot avoid saying that Joseph’s resolution to pursue his own particular interest by all the means in his power without regard with any other is so apparent and his measures so unjustifiable that wee see no prospect of limiting him by any means but those of legal force which must be both to the loss of the estate and the dishonour of the family.<sup>146</sup>

Joseph, in the minds of the executors, was an impetuous and selfish young man and his actions were the reason for a large portion of the complications.<sup>147</sup> They suggested to Isaac Gale that Joseph:

has of late told us that he has taken such measures as that he is sure thou will not pay any of the debts nor contribute towards it the laws of this Country submits all

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<sup>145</sup> HSP, LFP, LJDE, Norris, Logan, Claypool to Isaac Gale, 6 August 1722.

<sup>146</sup> HSP, LFP, LJDE, Norris, Logan, Claypool to Isaac Gale, 6 August 1722.

<sup>147</sup> The fundamental problem was that Joseph was a lair. The executors suggested to Isaac Gale that ‘Great part of Joseph’s discourse before he went from hence relating to ye Estate was of finding Means in England or Jamaica to pay off all the debts at once in which wee were ever for encouraging him if he contribute to effecting of it and by his language one would judge he had an assurance from his uncle Caleb that he would advance a thousand pounds for that purpose. Two of us have letters severally from Caleb by Captain Annis in which we can discover no such intention at present.’ HSP, LFP, LJDE, Norris, Logan, Claypool to Isaac Gale, 1 July 1723. George Claypool suggested to Joseph that his promises ‘but now finds (as heretofore) they are as often broken as maide and that it is harde nay impossible to kill a weed the soile hath so naturally a disposition to produce.’ HSP, LFP, LJDE, George Claypool to Joseph Dickinson, 31 August 1723.



estates whatsoever to the payment of debt and he knows that the mansion house being granted to him by the will must be last taken in the execution of the same laws and if the other estates given the children prove sufficient to discharge the debts he will then be safe in his part here as well as in Jamaica lett them fair as they can.<sup>148</sup>

The executors reminded Joseph that he ‘often promised to give [them] no further trouble’ but he ‘always as certainly broke those promises.’ They hoped that he would see the error of his ways but they continued to receive ‘only abuses in return for our patience and insults for our friendly endeavors.’<sup>149</sup> Eventually, they became more forceful. They reminded Joseph that ‘money thou calls thy own and thou further keeps from us what the law certainly makes assets in our hands for which we are accountable by law.’ They continued, ‘in short, instead of being a Friend to thee interest or shewing the least respect to thy Father’s memory thou acts as an enemy with regard to conscience, justice, honour, or anything else but what appears thy own present interest.’ They argued that ‘the other children suffer...wee are abused and all this is owing to thee rashness and folly to which thy inexperienced and undisciplined youth with an overweening opinion of thyself unhappily subjects thee.’<sup>150</sup> Then at the cost of their reputation they threatened Joseph:

through our tenderness for the whole family forbore taking more rigourous measures till our own reputation suffer by our lenity wee shall now without delay proceed to use such as are necessary to compel thee to the justice that is due...to use for what is wanting to our satisfaction and that we have better assurance of

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<sup>148</sup> HSP, LFP, LJDE, Norris, Logan, Claypool to Isaac Gale, 6 August 1722.

<sup>149</sup> HSP, LFP, LJDE, Norris, Logan, Claypool to Joseph Dickinson, 10 August 1722.

<sup>150</sup> HSP, LFP, LJDE, Norris, Logan, Claypool to Joseph Dickinson, 10 August 1722.

thy behaviour to us as executors for the future in which thou has most shamefully and dishonourably failed.<sup>151</sup>

Beyond blocking their efforts in Philadelphia, Joseph created problems for the executors by misrepresenting his father's wishes in Jamaica. They informed Isaac Gale that they:

could not without uneasiness observe the great difference (if we understood right)...of the impressions we had reason to believe thy Nephew Joseph's false representations after his arrival there...thou fell into the opinion that the debts should be discharged by the estate here and the Legacy's only be paid by that in Jamaica.<sup>152</sup>

But the executors clearly laid out their plan for settling the estate and informed Isaac Gale of those plans. Nevertheless they had:

great reason to believe that the whole estate here taking in all that is given to the children will not be sufficient upon legal execution to pay the debts. The three principle parts of thy Brother estate here were, Frankford Plantation granted to Jonathan, his dwelling house allotted to Joseph, and the Vineyard to John, the first of these is an absolute grant wholly out of the executors power and within these 3 days were are told that Jonathan has found means from it being granted in that manner to put it also out of the creditor reach which we assure your was without our privity or consent. There are also due from the estate two Debts more considerable than the rest, viz: one to the proprietor for above a thousand pounds sterling to be paid by and agreement in London which Our laws require to be first

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<sup>151</sup> HSP, LFP, LJDE, Norris, Logan, Claypool to Joseph Dickinson, 10 August 1722.

<sup>152</sup> HSP, LFP, LJDE, Norris, Logan, Claypool to Isaac Gale, 21 September 1723.

discharged, and the other for about £1,057 of this money to the Hopes from which a judgment is recovered...we have secured the Vineyard Land for the payment of the debts to the proprietor at two annual payments with interest at 6%. As we also hinted formerly and are now securing the dwelling house viz Joseph for the payment of the Hopes debt in the like manner in London in two years to come with interest at 6%. As to the other debts we discharge them as fast as effects or money can be gott.<sup>153</sup>

But the plan did not go off as planned because John, influenced by his brother, blocked the executors from taking the Pennsylvania property. Claypool wrote to Norris that 'John Dickinson was at the vineyard and locked up the barn...and had taken away the keys...he told me he had taken possession and would keep it.'<sup>154</sup>

To further complicate matters, Dickinson's brother-in-law and his Jamaica executor, Isaac Gale, died during the winter of 1723. His responsibilities as executor were passed to his brother Jonathan Gale, who was evidently unfamiliar with preceding two years of complications.<sup>155</sup> Therefore, the executors informed Jonathan Gale of the situation as it stood in 1723:

which give full account of the condition of the estate here and the unreasonable and as we think unjust interposition of the children especially Joseph to embarrass all our proceeding in pursuit of the true intent of the will to gett ye debts paid off and so save the estate for the children upon reading the will it will be perceiv'd that the testator knowing his engagement and that his estate here brings in little or no annual income directed and had his dependance that his estate in Jamaica (as it

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<sup>153</sup> HSP, LFP, LJDE, Norris, Logan, Claypool to Isaac Gale, 21 September 1723.

<sup>154</sup> HSP, LFP, LJDE, George Claypool to Isaac Norris, 26 November 1723.

<sup>155</sup> HSP, LFP, LJDE, Norris, Claypool to Jonathan Gale, 9 February 1723/24.

was his fund and support in his lifetime) should be continued to raise a fund in Brittain until his debts were discharged as this was the place of residence so of course demand would be made here wee endeavor'd to keep of the creditors... The plantation here call'd the Vineyard purchase of our propriety was never paid from and stands mortgaged for ye payment of about eleven hundred pounds sterling. This by will is given when the debts are paid to John but unless that money be paid in Brittain he can never enjoy it. There is also a debt of about seven hundred pounds sterling with interest accruing due to Archibold and Henry Hope of Rotterdam There are two other sterling debts due to Richard Champion and John Askew all this wee gave full account of to Isaac Gale but his Death succeeding that bad year for crops in Jamaica has hitherto postpon'd all undoubtedly.<sup>156</sup>

The settlement remained unchanged for the next several years but by 1726 Joseph Dickinson had taken possession of the Jamaican estates and left the executors in the dark about their production. They informed Jonathan Gale that 'Joseph and Jon...carry themselves as such distance or behave in such manner that we are much in the dark as to what value hath been ship'd to London or which or how much of the debts there are discharged.' They continued, 'we hope Joseph's ungrateful usage of thy lenity will be a caution against throwing more into their hands than is really necessary.'<sup>157</sup>

In the winter of 1726, Joseph returned to Philadelphia and the executors hoped they might resolve their issues and find relief from their duties. The matter, however, only got worse. Joseph, with a new sense of his father's possessions in Jamaica, was

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<sup>156</sup> HSP, LFP, LJDE, Norris, Claypool to Jonathan Gale, 19 June 1724.

<sup>157</sup> HSP, LFP, LJDE, Norris, Logan, Claypool to Jonathan Gale, 18 July 1726.

more steadfast and convinced his siblings of the justice of his cause. The executors suggested that ‘on Joseph’s arrival all the children being then together here [we] had reason...to expect some measures would be taken or proposed at least the terminate all the depending affairs of ye estate to which their own interest should have so strongly obliged them.’ Conversely, however, ‘the effect of this meeting proved no other than...to demonstrate to ye world how much their father had been in ye right in judging their as his did in making his will.’ They concluded that they ‘would either choose to cast a veil over their conduct for their parents sake than to expose it, and therefore shall say nothing further of it.’<sup>158</sup>

In 1727 Norris summed-up his feelings about the whole ordeal: ‘among ye unhappy & troublesome accidents of my life I do justly rank my being named one of the executors in ye will of my late friend Jonathan Dickinson.’<sup>159</sup> He further related the proceeding five years to Thomas Hyam, ‘we have no asset left but some plate & lands which we have been desirous to save & devide among the children. Notwithstanding ye scandalous & ungratefull usage we have met with from some of them...seiz[ing] upon everything they cold especially a cargo from Jamaica which arrived just before their father’s death.’ He lamented that ‘the Estate in Jamaica was appointed to pay all ye debts which with any tolerable degree of good management might have been done long before this, besides affording a hand some support to the children.’ He continued, ‘after the death of Isaac Gale the young men taking possession & leaving Joseph manager there appears little or no care to pay ye Debts but a scramble among them each to seize or

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<sup>158</sup> HSP, LFP, LJDE, Norris, Logan, Claypool to Jonathan Gale, 3 December 1726.

<sup>159</sup> HSP, Norris Family Papers, Norris Letterbook, Isaac Norris to Thomas Hyam, 4 (no month) 1727.

obtain as much as he can to support ye will of ye present day.’ In the end, Norris noted that ‘their uncommon & most indecent behavior towards us would shut us from any regard to them or their, were not ye discharge of a good conscience in view.’ Despite all the trouble Norris concluded by saying, ‘I have never touched a penny nor do expect compensation for ye Trouble.’<sup>160</sup>

After Dickinson’s eldest son, Jonathan, died in October 1727 while visiting family in Long Island, the executors wrote to Joseph in London acknowledging that they intended to ‘discharge [his] fathers debts that thou hadst told the Penn’s if they would give security that ye bonds Mortgages and Deeds for Springetsbury Mannor...thou wouldst pay the money there...[but] that thou wouldst pay what is due to Arch[ibald Hope].’<sup>161</sup> They argued that ‘it is indeed full time these debts with all others due from your father’s estate were discharged, being now above six years since his decease but the requiring security from those to whom ye money is due is what we doe not very well comprehend.’ They contended that ‘the intention in both was that the money should be paid, and when that is done to ye persons who have ye right to receive it there in no further occasion for scruples.’<sup>162</sup>

Evidently, Joseph remained reluctant to give up all he had finagled from his father’s estate over the preceding six years. His cause was further aided by the death of his younger brother, John, in 1729, at which point Joseph effectively owned all of what remained of his father’s estate. Eager to protect his ‘possessions’ he drafted a will disposing all his interests in Jamaica to his daughter Mary and his sisters Mary and

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<sup>160</sup> HSP, NFP, NLB, Isaac Norris to Thomas Hyam, 4 (no month) 1727.

<sup>161</sup> HSP, NFP, NLB, Isaac Norris to Caleb Dickinson, 23 October 1727.

<sup>162</sup> HSP, LFP, LJDE, Norris, Logan, and Claypool to Joseph Dickinson, 4 November 1728.

Hannah.<sup>163</sup> Less than a decade later, however, nearly every one involved in the dispute was dead including Jonathan, Joseph, John, Mary, and Hannah. Two of the three executors George Claypool and Isaac Norris died in the early 1730s and James Logan was the sole executor of Dickinson's will. The will remained unsettled for more than two decades.<sup>164</sup>

## **Conclusion**

At the beginning of the 1740s, an elderly James Logan was still trying to settle Dickinson's accounts. In August 1743 he wrote to the surviving trustee of the Hopes of Rotterdam, who had also died, about a 'notice to sell property to settle debts of Dickinson's estate to Archibold and Henry Hope.'<sup>165</sup> Five years later, Logan 'by an incurable lament reduced to crutches & otherwise infirm in Body, having grown tired of the ordeal...committed the whole business to a Draughtmen' thereby washing his hands of the ordeal more than two decades later.<sup>166</sup> While Logan was finished, the estate remained unsettled until the 1760s when Dickinson's nephew began to manage their family estates in Jamaica.

Eventually Dickinson's possessions in Pennsylvania were sold piecemeal or moved outside the Dickinson family. The property Dickinson held dear, 'the Vineyard' he bequeathed to his son, John, who at his death in 1729, passed to his sister, Mary, and her husband, Francis Jones, and thereby out of the Dickinson family.<sup>167</sup> A seemingly fitting legacy of Dickinson estate, however, did remain. Dickinson's main dwelling, his

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<sup>163</sup> HSP, Society Collection, Will of Joseph Dickinson, 14 August 1730.

<sup>164</sup> HSP, Peter Papers, Opinion of Dudley Ryder on Dickinson Estate, 23 February 1742/43.

<sup>165</sup> HSP, LFP, LLB, James Logan to C. Plumsted, 27 August 1743.

<sup>166</sup> HSP, LFP, James Logan's Comments of Estate of Jonathan Dickinson, 1748.

<sup>167</sup> Philadelphia City Archives, Box A, 967, Fairmount Park Commission Land Titles for Flat Iron Park.

‘grand and handsome’ house on the Bank side on Front Street below Walnut Street was destroyed by fire in 1730 and was for many years suffered to remain in ruins. It was known by the citizens of that day as ‘Dickinson’s Burnt Buildings.’<sup>168</sup>

Dickinson’s possessions in Jamaica eventually passed to his nephews, Caleb’s three sons, residing in England. Dickinson’s nephews would benefit greatly from the disintegration of his estate because they inherited the properties just as sugar-planting in Jamaica was turning the corner. As absentee planters, Dickinson’s nephews parlayed their inherited lands in Jamaica into a vast landed estate in England.

This long episode illustrates just how uncertain fortunes were at the beginning of the eighteenth century. In the matter of a decade, one of early Pennsylvania’s wealthiest and most prominent families was torn asunder by the struggles to keep their estate together. Ultimately, Jonathan Dickinson and his family paid some of the cost for English colonies *becoming Atlantic*.

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<sup>168</sup> A fire broke out in a store near Mr. Fishbourne’s wharf, and consumed all the stores there, damaged several houses on that side of the street, and crossing the way seized the fine house of Jonathan Dickinson, with two others toward Walnut Street, which were all ruined. The loss was £5,000. After this fire, a subscription was forthwith set on foot ‘to supply the town’ with everything requisite to put out fire. John Fanning Watson, *Annals of Philadelphia and Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia, 1881, p. 497; HSP, Penn Papers, Official Correspondence, *Correspondence between William Penn and James Logan*, 1, pp. 424.



## **CHAPTER 7: A NEW ATLANTIC.**

This dissertation has examined how Jonathan Dickinson made sense of the mercurial and uncertain Atlantic world around the turn of the eighteenth century. The preceding chapters examined Dickinson's interactions with an extremely diverse group of European, Native American, and African peoples who collectively comprised a formative generation of colonial society in North America and the West Indies. By analysing Dickinson's social and commercial maneuvers through the uncertainties of this period, this work has argued that contingency for unforeseen events was a fundamental organising principle of many early-Atlantic peoples. I contend that individuals, driven by self-preservation and influenced by local circumstances, dictated the direction and the pace of many inter-colonial, inter-imperial, and trans-Atlantic developments familiar to the late-eighteenth-century Anglo-Atlantic world. In short, new exigencies outweighed custom, and self-preservation, rather than directives from metropolitan governments, guided many Atlantic peoples' actions.

I have argued that the contentious conditions of local milieus heavily influenced the trends that guided the development of disparate colonies around the Anglo-Atlantic. Furthermore, as a result of various political and economic struggles, colonists developed localised colonial identities that did not necessarily coincide with directions from the mother country. Moreover, this quasi-independence helped create a generation of ambitious Atlantic-world peoples, like Jonathan Dickinson, who were forced to negotiate the exigencies of their lives in the colonies by reacting and creating avenues for contingency for the seemingly endless problems, turned opportunities, they faced as a result of this imperial neglect. These circumstances were particularly apparent during the

period from 1655 to 1725, and in particular from the 1690s through the 1710s. I have illustrated that during this period, trans-Atlantic relationships between England and the Anglo-Atlantic colonies were often ill defined and fluid. Colonists, like Dickinson, either more willing or better suited to maneuver across imperial lines, developed relationships with a myriad of peoples who did not necessarily identify themselves as English. The diversity of Atlantic world peoples is reflected in the diversity of their interactions.

By abandoning the idea of the centrality of the mother countries, their rulers, and their institutions, I have presented a slightly grittier but more organic Atlantic world. Rather than an Atlantic world engineered from above the heads of its constitutive parts, this Atlantic world was constructed from the strands of individual lives and the from the repercussions of their actions.<sup>1</sup> Contingency played a vital role in the everyday lives of the Atlantic peoples who Dickinson interacted with at the turn of the early-eighteenth century. Their collective ability to deal with the many uncertainties of this period provides the context for understanding how subsequent generations of Anglo-Atlantic peoples thrived.

Dickinson did not intentionally set out to create an inter-imperial Atlantic marketplace nor did he plan to develop Atlantic-wide institutions or networks. In the face of constant uncertainty, Dickinson actively exhausted every viable opportunity to advance his personal ventures. Pennsylvania colonists, as did their Anglo-Jamaican counterparts, struggled to find their place within the emerging Atlantic world during the beginning of eighteenth century. Nevertheless, Philadelphia and Jamaica rose to prominence. Through this process, people living in these colonies shaped the patterns of

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<sup>1</sup> David Hancock, *Oceans of Wine. Madeira and the Emergence of American Trade and Taste* (New Haven, 2009), pp. xiii-xxix.

the Atlantic world in significant ways. Florida, on the other hand, remained a source of contention between competing European powers throughout this period. In the end, Native Americans paid the ultimate price for the consolidation of European power in the American Southeast. Undoubtedly, as Europeans established more and more settlements along the coast between South Carolina, New England, and the West Indians mainland colonies functioned less like islands separated by Native Americans. Consolidation, however, forced colonists to define more precisely the political and socio-economic boundaries that separated them from one another.<sup>2</sup>

Dickinson's creative opportunism and his ability to manage commercial endeavors that involved four continents, hundreds of business partners and customers, amid all the uncertainties of both trading and planting is what makes him useful to understanding the developments of the early eighteenth century. The interactions of Anglo-Atlantic colonists with other Europeans, Africans, and Native Americans along several European frontiers had profound effects on the development of the Atlantic world colonies and their subsequent convergence into or competition with the emerging British Empire. Anglophone colonials did not exclusively guide the development of the Anglo-Atlantic colonies. By shouldering the burdens of unstable markets, inconsistent production and supply, threats of piracy, war, weather, and increased regulatory legislation, Dickinson and his contemporaries created a new Atlantic world. In the process they delivered the nascent connective strands of the early-eighteenth-century trans-Atlantic marketplace to the many planters and merchants who wove together those

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<sup>2</sup> April Lee Hatfield, *Atlantic Virginia. Intercolonial Relations in the Seventeenth Century* (Philadelphia, 2004), p. 221.

strands into the gilded fabric of late-eighteenth century Anglo-Atlantic commercial empire.

### **Revisiting Jamaica**

When Dickinson departed Jamaica in 1696, sugar planting was still in its infancy. Anglo-Jamaicans contended with a host of issues from international war and slave rebellions, to rampant disease and improper supply. When Dickinson died in 1722, Jamaica was coming of age but the diminishing number of Anglo-Jamaicans continually struggled to find their place within the emerging Atlantic economy. Eventually, enslaved Africans began to arrive in the island in greater numbers and Jamaican sugar production began to turn the corner toward unparalleled growth. Wealthy planters eventually consolidated their possessions, as well as their power in the island. From the very first days after the conquest, those who settled the island were left largely on their own to develop the island, secure its borders, and develop its social, economic, religious, and political infrastructure. As suggested throughout this dissertation, problems also offered opportunities. Jamaica's isolation helped create a new generation of Anglo-Jamaicans ready to address the fundamental problems facing the island's society. In many cases, the generation after Dickinson did so successfully. Having learned many valuable lessons from the first two generations of Anglo-Jamaicans, this new crop of planters increasingly left the island for the comfort of England after solidifying their interests in the island. From across the ocean, absentee planters left the island to an exponentially growing number of enslaved Africans and immigrant managers who consistently funneled the profits of their labor home.

After Dickinson's death, the face of Jamaica changed. Jamaica was England's

leading sugar exporter for most of the eighteenth century and in the 1770s production surpassed all the other English islands combined. In 1700, the island's worth measured in inventories and real estate estimates, totaled just over £2,000,000. By 1750, Jamaica's wealth amounted to nearly £10,000,000. During the next twenty-five years Jamaica's wealth nearly tripled again, totaling just over £28,000,000. Jamaica was easily the wealthiest colony in the British Empire. By extension, Anglo-Jamaicans were the richest people in the British Empire.<sup>3</sup> Production more than quadrupled between the 1720s and the 1770s. Richard Dunn suggests that 'the sugar and slave system of plantation life matured quickly in the English islands under the tropical sun'.<sup>4</sup> Trevor Burnard suggests that Jamaica during the mid-eighteenth century was the 'powerhouse of the British Empire...the place par excellence where [British immigrants] could attain wealth and happiness'.<sup>5</sup> This Jamaica was far different than the Jamaica Dickinson contended with at the turn of the eighteenth century. This was the Jamaica Dickinson's nephews inherited.

By the 1740s, Dickinson's nephews, the sons of Caleb, Ezekiel, Caleb II, and Vickris, jointly owned their father's landed property in Jamaica, as well as their uncle's property. The three brothers not only inherited the land, they also became the benefactors of their family's hard work. Dickinson and Caleb built the foundation for the success of the next generation. They had literally built Jamaican society from the ground up. The three brothers were absentee planters who residing in England. As absentee planters, Dickinson's nephews parlayed their inherited lands in Jamaica into vast landed estates in

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<sup>3</sup> Trevor Burnard, *Mastery, Tyranny, and Desire. Thomas Thistlewood and his Slaves in the Anglo-Jamaican World* (Chapel Hill, 2004), p. 14.

<sup>4</sup> Richard Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves. The Rise of the Planter Class in the English West Indies, 1624-1713* (Chapel Hill, 1972), p. 335.

<sup>5</sup> Burnard, *Mastery, Tyranny, and Desire*, p. 13.

England. Through their acquisition of wealth, Dickinson's nephew became influential players in the emerging English gentry. Caleb II's only son, William Dickinson, inherited all of the property in Jamaica in 1783 after his father's death. William did not follow his father's mercantile concerns. Having served in Parliament three times, he was more interested in politics. His interests in Jamaica, however, provided him with considerable wealth. The Jamaican estates were not the liabilities they were at the beginning of the century. William continued his family's interests with the West Indies, adding to his interests there through his wife's family. The Jamaican estates continued to provide profits for the England-based Dickinsons until the end of slavery.

The lands first granted to Francis Dickinson in 1655, made profitable by Jonathan and Caleb, fought for by Joseph, and exploited by Ezekiel, Caleb II, and Vickris, and William, are now a part of the *Appleton Estate, Jamaica Rum Distillery*. Appleton Estate, an award winning rum distillery, managed by J. Wray and Nephew Ltd., happily claim to be the 'oldest sugar estate and distillery in Jamaica.' The distillers claim 1749 as their inception date. They might be better served, as would historians, if they looked beyond the 'glory days' of the British Empire to consider the foundational and transitional period from 1655 to 1725 when Dickinson set their course. Therefore, Dickinson's legacy continues.

### **Revisiting Florida**

Seventeenth-century Florida was a dynamic place where several autonomous Native American groups interacted with a number of different Europeans and their Native American allies living in mission towns around Saint Augustine. Native Americans along the southeast coast were not mere dupes caught up in the events of the colonial

period. They maintained their way of life, their socio-political organisation, and their religion. They not only took an active role in the new world developing around them, they utilised the standing animosities of different Europeans to their advantage.<sup>6</sup>

In the context of competing empires, it appears that for this brief period, the Native Americans were victorious in contending with the uncertainties of this period. While the ultimate demise of these three groups waited on the horizon, Dickinson's journal presented a collection of highly sophisticated Native American groups who actively contended with the same issues Europeans faced at the turn of the eighteenth century. Europeans and Native Americans sought to maintain traditional ways of life, adjust to new trade opportunities, and incorporate new peoples and their actions into their collective worldviews. The Jobé, the Santaluces, and the Ais all figured out how to work these shifting circumstances to their advantage. In the end, these groups successfully maintained their autonomy and in some instances enhanced their position along this European frontier.

Dickinson's time in Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina, however, occurred on the eve of the most destructive period of the early colonial history of the American Southeast. During the first decades of the eighteenth century, England and Spain engaged in a life and death struggle for control over the area's resources. During the struggles Europeans pitted Native American groups against one another. The end result was catastrophic. The English with their new Native American allies threatened to topple not just the mission system but also the entire Spanish presence in Florida. What

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<sup>6</sup> Jerald Milanich, *Florida Indians and the Invasion from Europe* (Gainesville, 1995), p. 51.

weakened Spain even more—and at just the wrong time—was France’s reentry into the South at the beginning of the eighteenth century.<sup>7</sup>

The English recognised the importance of the missions to the colony of La Florida. Weakening the missions would weaken Spain’s hold on La Florida. In the space of five years, 1702-1706 the American Southeast changed forever. Disease and an alliance between the English and Native Americans decimated Florida’s aboriginal population. The Apalachee mission system collapsed.<sup>8</sup> Slave raiders drove the Timucua from their homes and enslaved many more. This time the Ais, the Santaluces, and the Jobe could not withstand larger forces at work. The English confined the Spanish in northern Florida to the environs of Saint Augustine and Pensacola and their Native American allies raided for Native American captives as far south as the Florida Keys.

After the swirl of invasion that began with the English failure to take Saint Augustine in 1702 and ended with the Franco-Spanish fiasco against Charlestown in 1706, the Europeans scurried for alliances with Native Americans. South Carolina’s phenomenal success in destroying Spanish missions raised English prestige and facilitated the recruitment of larger Native American forces for campaigns against their enemies.<sup>9</sup> Within several years, however South Carolinians so alienated their allies that they banded together in a pan-Indian movement that ended the large-scale slaving of native peoples. During their worst crisis of the early colonial period, South Carolinians faced not a single monolithic Indian enemy but a number of different Indian enemies who fought with different motives and different levels of intensity that were predicated by

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<sup>7</sup> Alan Galloway, *The Indian Slave Trade. The Rise of the English Empire in the American South, 1670-1717* (New Haven, 2002), pp. 98-9.

<sup>8</sup> John Hann, *Apalachee. The Land Between the Rivers* (Gainesville, 1988); Hann and Bonnier McEwan, *The Apalachee Indians the Mission San Luis* (Gainesville, 1998).

<sup>9</sup> Galloway, *The Indian Slave Trade*, pp. 198.



varying degrees of interactions with the colonists.<sup>10</sup> The Yamasee War devastated South Carolina and it took years for South Carolina to rebuild. By 1730, however, the colony emerged in a dramatically new form. A plantation-based economy revolved around rice while continuing to produce cattle, food, and wood products for West Indian markets.<sup>11</sup>

The storms that swept Spanish Florida in the years after Dickinson escaped the peninsula destroyed its mission populations, rolled by its frontiers to the gates of St. Augustine, and converted the colony into a purely military outpost.<sup>12</sup> These storms were not the same that left Dickinson stranded along the east coast. These storms were much larger forces brought about by the competition of empires in the American Southeast. By the early 1760s the indigenous population of Florida, once numbering in the hundreds of thousands, was reduced to almost nothing.<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless, Great Britain, by 1763, achieved their goal of consolidating power along North America's Atlantic coast at the Peace of Paris in 1763. Yet their new colony or new colonies, East Florida and West Florida, proved to be problematic. In essence, Anglo-Floridians now faced the same problems their Pennsylvania and Jamaican counterparts had faced at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Comparatively feeble attempts to develop trade routes, find profitable crops, and import labor all proved to be in vain. Ultimately, Great Britain gave up on Florida after the War of American Independence. The brief twenty-year period of British rule in Florida represents an interesting counterpoint that suggests that despite the rising prominence of the British Atlantic colonial endeavor, local circumstances and trans-Atlantic forces often guided the development or in this case, lack of development,

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<sup>10</sup> Steve Oatis, *A Colonial Complex. South Carolina's Frontiers in the Ear of the Yamasee War, 1680-1730* (Lincoln, 2004), pp. 113-4.

<sup>11</sup> Gallay, *The Indian Slave Trade*, p. 341.

<sup>12</sup> Paul Hoffman, *Florida's Frontiers*, (Bloomington, 2002), p. 174.

<sup>13</sup> Milanich, *Florida Indians and the Invasion from Europe*, p. 230.

in various places around the Atlantic world. By this time, Dickinson and his Native American counterparts had long been forgotten but through his journal the Native Americans of Florida's east coast and Dickinson's legacy continues.

### **Revisiting Pennsylvania**

In 1721, Dickinson surveyed Pennsylvania's grim situation: trade nearly stopped, money scarce, and imports depressed. Dickinson further worried that unless people were given additional time to pay for their necessities, many of them would be ill prepared for the ensuing winter. Dickinson died the next summer. Other Pennsylvanians, however, continued to express similar sentiments as they faced, according to the provincial and proprietary secretary, James Logan, the worst economic depression the colony had ever experienced.<sup>14</sup> While a variety of factors caused this economic failure, falling grain prices, the disruptions of the South Seas Company stock crash, a lack of a stable currency, want of laborers, and improper supply of Atlantic goods, all coalesced in the final years of Dickinson's life.

Despite these problems, during the period from 1710 to 1760, the province experienced phenomenal growth. The population expanded from 24,400 to almost 184,000. Perhaps the most significant component of this population expansion was its non-English component of nearly 40,000 Germans and 30,000 Scots-Irish. Much of the growth can be attributed to Dickinson and his contemporaries' ability to negotiate the uncertainties of the period. They established consistent trade routes, found viable

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<sup>14</sup> Library Company of Philadelphia, Jonathan Dickinson Letterbook, 1715-1721, p. 385; 'The Assembly, the Economy, and the Growth of the Province,' in Craig, W. Horle Jeffery L. Scheib and Joseph S. Foster (eds), *Lawmaking and Legislators in Pennsylvania. A Biographical Dictionary, 1710-1756* (Philadelphia, 1997), pp. 42-3

markets, and established a consistent supply of labor. Their hard work created avenues by which wealth and immigrants funneled into the mid-Atlantic port.

This new immigration, however, was cause for concern. In 1717, Dickinson reported to a correspondent with some unease that 2,200 Germans alone had arrived in the matter of four months. Despite his concerns, economic growth in Pennsylvania was strongest from the 1730s through the 1750s, as first the huge wave of German and Scots-Irish immigrants and then the Seven Years' War pumped new capital into the economy.<sup>15</sup> The Seven Years' War also created an increased demand for enslaved Africans as the supply of white servants dwindled. During the period from 1756 until 1765, slavery and slave-trading reached their height in colonial Philadelphia.<sup>16</sup> Pennsylvania's population, which had been comparatively homogenous during the first two generations of English settlement, began to take on an Atlantic characteristic. Various Europeans—English, Germans, Scots-Irish, some remaining Dutch and Swedish colonists—Native Americans, and various enslaved Africans, who increasingly arrived directly from Africa, were forced to redefine their positions within this expanding Atlantic colony.

Ironically, the new Pennsylvania elite began to express the same sentiments their English counterparts expressed about them decades before. Both Dickinson and Isaac Norris were part of the founding generation of Jamaica society, 'the very scum of scums, and meer dregs of corruption.'<sup>17</sup> Of their new German and Scots-Irish counterparts, Norris suggested that they were the 'very Scum of Mankind.' Samuel Blunston

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<sup>15</sup> Jean Soderlund, *Quakers and Slavery. A Divided Spirit* (Princeton, 1985), p. 57.

<sup>16</sup> Gary Nash, 'Slave and Slaveowners in Philadelphia', *William and Mary Quarterly* 30:2 (1973), p. 229.

<sup>17</sup> *A brief and perfect Journal of the late Proceedings and Success of the English Army in the West Indies, by I. S. an Eye-Witness*. (London: 1655), p. 11.

dismissed them as 'Idle trash.'<sup>18</sup> Nevertheless, the nature of Pennsylvania was changing before their eyes. No longer would Quakers dominate the socio-economic and political direction of the colony. Rather, Pennsylvania's multicultural society comprised of European, Native American and Africans and relationships with the wider Atlantic world would come to define this 'crossroad of empire'.<sup>19</sup>

While this is the end of Dickinson's Atlantic, it was only the beginning of a new British Atlantic.

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<sup>18</sup> Norris and Blunton quoted in 'The Assembly, the Economy, and the Growth of the Province' in *Legislators and Lawmakers*, pp. 49-50.

<sup>19</sup> Ned Landsmen, *Crossroads of Empire. The Middle Colonies of British North America* (Baltimore, 2010).

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